

# John R. Torrey

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Department of Philosophy  
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## **Areas of Specialization**

Social and Political Philosophy, African-American Philosophy

## **Areas of Competence**

Applied Ethics, Philosophy of Education, Pre-College Philosophy

## **Employment**

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Assistant Professor of Philosophy – SUNY Buffalo State (Buffalo, NY) 2019-current

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy – SUNY Buffalo State (Buffalo, NY) 2018-2019

Adjunct Professor – Arkansas State University Mid-South (West Memphis, AR) 2015-2016

## **Education**

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PhD in Philosophy – University of Memphis (Memphis, TN)

Dissertation Title: Social Recognition as a Problem for Black Rectificatory Justice

Directors: Luveell Anderson, Remy Debes

Committee: Deborah Tollefsen, Thomas Nenon

M.A. in Philosophy – University of Memphis (Memphis, TN)

B.A., *cum laude*, in Philosophy and Spanish – Morehouse College (Atlanta, GA)

## **Peer-Reviewed Journal Publications**

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- “Beyond the Bank: Justice, Injustice and Black Reparations” in *Precollege Philosophy and Public Practice* 4.1 (Spring 2022), ed. Kris Phillips, 51-67.
- “Crisis as Possibility: Two Potential Paths Forward” in *Philosophy of Education* 77.1 (Summer 2021), ed. Winston Thompson, 106-110.
- “Black Lives Matter’s Normativity and the Canon’s Inability to Connect with the Movement” in *the APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience*, 16.2 (Spring 2017), ed. Stephen Ferguson and Dwayne Tunstall, 17–22.

## **Book Publications**

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- “The (un)Political Classroom: How Content and Positionality Intersect” in *The Art of Teaching Philosophy*, ed. Brynn Welch. Bloomsbury Press: 2024 (forthcoming).
- “HBCUs and the Ethical Dilemmas of Meeting Contemporary Expectations” with Corey Reed in *Ethics in Higher Education: Promoting Equity and Inclusion Through Case-Based Inquiry*, ed. Rebecca Taylor and Ashley Floyd Kuntz, Harvard Education Press: 2021, 165-171.
- “Reaching Out to the Underrepresented: An interview with John R. Torrey” in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of the City*, ed. Sharon M. Meager, Samantha Noll, and Joseph S. Biehl, Routledge, 2020, 407-411.
- “The Case of Kitty Genovese: Moral Responsibility and the Bystander Effect” in *The Perspectives of Children: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools*, ed. Jana Mohr Lone and Michael Burroughs, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 178–180.

## **Blog Publications/Podcasts/Radio Interviews**

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- “Memphis Police Release Video of Tyre Nichols,” an interview on NPR affiliate WBFO Radio hosted by David Debo. Published January 30, 2023. [Buffalo, What's Next? | Memphis Police Release Video of Tyre Nichols Death | WBFO](#)
- “HBCUs Present & Future,” a podcast discussion hosted by Dr. John Torrey with Dr. Felecia Commodore, Dr. Joyce King, and Dr. Corey Reed. Published June 21, 2022. <https://pod.link/1533755983/episode/b4c791e572ee59f0e308a6768e2d43ba?fbclid=IwAR00eKNIAq5VMYHzA0-zr9d-9VujEIYpgjh4nr-GOOLWHUwCNJKpAky440E>
- “Beyond the Bank: Justice, Injustice, and Black Reparations,” an interview on the WCEG Talk Radio hosted by Norman Carter, Jr. Published March 14, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkK2ySlgrtA>
- “Reparations as a Societal Project: Some Practical Considerations,” on the Radical Philosophy Hour, a discussion with Dr. Anwar Uhuru on hosted by Dr. Brandon Absher. Published March 7, 2022. [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch\\_permalink&v=3072705879713940](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=3072705879713940)
- “Hang the DJ” with special guest John Torrey,” an interview on the Black Mirror Reflections Podcast (Episode 21) by Dr. Leigh Johnson. Published February 28, 2021. [http://www.readmorewritemorethinkmorebemore.com/2021/02/black-mirror-reflections-ep-21-hang-dj.html?fbclid=IwAR1puMfp\\_TjvWL2d6X0eHQW58JBq2xfJMui75zh2wsNRYlCvJuHyvgYM5Dg](http://www.readmorewritemorethinkmorebemore.com/2021/02/black-mirror-reflections-ep-21-hang-dj.html?fbclid=IwAR1puMfp_TjvWL2d6X0eHQW58JBq2xfJMui75zh2wsNRYlCvJuHyvgYM5Dg)
- “Reparations,” an interview on the UnMute Podcast (Episode 52) by Dr. Myisha Cherry. Published May 5, 2020. <https://unmutetalk.podbean.com/e/episode-052-john-torrey-on-reparations/>
- “What More Do You Want?” an interview on Not Politics (Episode 3) by Dr. Michael Butler and Dr. Zeke Walker-Roos. Published March 8, 2020. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/this-is-not-politics/id1459189183?i=1000467892656>

- “John Torrey,” an interview conducted for the Engaged Philosophy website about civic engagement in philosophy classes. Published July 26, 2017. <http://www.engagedphilosophy.com/2017/07/26/john-torrey/>
- “A Personal Connection with God,” an interview conducted by Dr. Helen De Cruz for *The Prosblogion*, a philosophy of religion blog. Published November 2, 2016. <http://prosblogion.ektopos.com/2016/11/02/personal-connection-with-god/>
- “Philosophical Horizons,” an essay about doing precollege philosophy for the Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) website. Published 2013. <http://www.plato-philosophy.org/john-torrey-philosophical-horizons/>
- “Philosophical Horizons: Guest Post From John Torrey, University of Memphis,” a post describing the benefits of precollege philosophy through the Philosophical Horizons program for the *Enable Education* website. Published June 20, 2013. <http://enableeducation.com/blog/philosophical-horizons-guest-post-from-john-torrey-university-of-memphis/#.WCOJ8slA7Hg>

## **Scholarships, Grants, and Awards**

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### Grants

- Buffalo Public Schools Contract to Facilitate Teaching Emancipation Curriculum for \$5,000 with Prof. Naila Ansari, Dr. Marcus Watson, and Dr. Cameron Herman (2021)
- Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) Philosophy Fund Grant for \$1,000 for the Buffalo State Lyceum (2019)
- American Philosophical Association Berry Fund for Public Philosophy Grant for \$1,000 for the Buffalo State Lyceum (2019)

### Fellowships

- Buffalo State College Faculty Fellowship – SUNY Buffalo State (2018-2019)
- Marcus Orr Center for the Humanities Dissertation Fellowship – University of Memphis (2018)
- Southern Regional Educational Board Dissertation Fellowship (2016–2017)
- Participant in the Spencer Foundation Institute on Philosophy of Education and Public Policy, (2013–2014)

### Awards

- Graduate Assistant Meritorious Teaching Award – University of Memphis (2017)
- Bornblum Travel Award – University of Memphis (2017)
- Philosophy Department Departmental Service Award - University of Memphis (2016–2017)

### Multi-Year Awards

- Provost Pre-Doctoral Diversity Graduate Teaching Assistantship – University of Memphis: 5-year award (2012–2017)

- Provost Pre-Doctoral Diversity Graduate Teaching Assistantship – University of Memphis: 2-year award (2009–2011)

## **Conference Presentations**

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- “*Life is Strange: Teaching Ethical Dilemmas through Video Games and Video Game Culture*,” at the 2022 Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) Conference, June 25, 2022 (Seattle, WA).
- “Teaching to Black Boxes and the Digital Disconnection in Virtual Teaching,” at the annual American Philosophical Association Central Division, February 23, 2022 (Chicago, IL)
- “HBCUs and Neoliberal Education” at the 2021 Radical Philosophy Association Conference, November 13, 2021 (Zoom).
- “Crisis as Possibility: Two Potential Paths Forward” at the annual Philosophy of Education Society Conference, March 3-8, 2021 (Zoom).
- “National Flash-points as a Form of Education about Race,” at the University of San Diego “Philosophy and Race Conference,” February 22, 2021 (Zoom).
- Collaboration project with Rebecca Taylor, “Dilemmas of Ethics and Justice in Higher Education: A Normative Case-Based Inquiry into the Future of HBCUs and the Free Tuition Debate,” at the annual meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, March 6-9, 2020 (Pittsburgh, PA).
- “Historically Black Colleges and Universities as Sites of Black Self-Determination,” at the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division, January 7-10, 2019 (New York, NY).
- “The Search for a New Canon,” at the annual meeting of the Research Association of Minority Professors, February 1-3, 2018 (Nashville, TN).
- “Post-Racial America Is a Nonexistent Utopia,” at the Society for Utopian Studies Conference, November 9–11, 2017 (Memphis, TN).
- Collaboration paper with Jonathan Wurtz, “What Do We Mean by Pre-College ‘Philosophy?’ Avoiding Professional Conservatism in Pre-College Classrooms,” at the Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) Conference, June 23–24, 2017 (Chicago, IL).
- “How Philosophy Outside of College Impacts the Ethical Development of Current Leaders in the Movement,” at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Consortium for the Study of Leadership and Ethics in Education’s Values and Leadership Conference, October 15–19, 2015 (State College, PA).
- Keynote collaboration with Michael Burroughs and Josh Dohmen, “Setting ‘Philosophical Horizons’ in Memphis: Philosophy and Education in the Bluff City,” at the annual meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, March 12–16, 2015 (Memphis, TN).
- Collaboration paper with Luvell Anderson, “The Struggle to Diversify Philosophy Pre- and Post-College,” at the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division, December 27–30, 2014 (Philadelphia, PA).
- “The Moral Costs of Cultural Code-Switching,” at the annual meeting of the Research Association of Minority Professors, February 6–8, 2014 (New Orleans, LA).

- “Outreach as Impact: Teaching Philosophy in an Informal Setting,” at the annual meeting of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers, Morehouse College, June 1, 2013 (Atlanta, GA).
- “A Commentary to ‘Standpoint and Class Consciousness as a Philosophy of Praxis,’” at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Association Conference, University of Memphis, April 5–6, 2013 (Memphis, TN).
- “Some Ethical and Meta-Ethical Considerations of Supporting the NAACP,” at the annual Ida B. Wells Philosophical Association Conference, October 29–30, 2010 (Memphis, TN).
- “Thinking and Education: Bringing the Two Back Together,” at the annual meeting of the Research Association of Minority Professors, February 21–22, 2010 (Houston, TX).

### **Invited Talks**

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- “Post-Racial Origins to Our Divided America,” the Buffalo State Talks Lecture Series at SUNY Buffalo State (April 12, 2023).
- “Reparations as Justice: Systemic Harms, Social Recognition, and Political Will,” the Dash Davis Lecture at Oakwood Friends School, Poughkeepsie, NY (November 18, 2022).
- “Racial Justice and Black Reparations,” at the First STL Symposium (January 9, 2021).
- “The Possibility of Black Reparations,” at SUNY Buffalo State’s “Conversations in and out of the Disciplines” speaker series (November 20, 2020).
- “Hidden Connections: Moral Rights and The Possibility of Black Reparations,” at Georgia Southern University (October 30, 2020).
- “Responding to Injustice: Blackness, Identity Politics, and Struggles with Police Reform,” at University at Buffalo’s Global to Local Speaker Series on Racial Justice (October 5, 2020).  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qXtQs4I4SQ&t=329s>
- “Reparations,” at Florida State University’s “Brain Freeze” speaker series (September 15, 2020).
- “‘Justice Gained’ and ‘Pathological Blackness:’ Critiquing Black Conservative Arguments against Reparations” at Morgan State University’s “HBCUs and Philosophy Conference” (keynote with honorarium planned for March 29, 2020 – postponed due to COVID-19).
- “Cancel Culture: Some Justifications and Implications,” at SUNY Buffalo State (April 1, 2019).
- “How Social Recognition Prevents Rectifying Injustices Against Black Americans,” at SUNY Buffalo State (December 6, 2018).
- “Dispelling the Myth of Philosophy’s Uselessness,” at Morehouse College (October 24, 2013).

### **Panel Presentations**

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- “HBCUs and the Ethical Dilemmas of Meeting Contemporary Expectations,” with Corey Reed at the Dilemmas of Ethics and Justice in Higher Education: *Bridging Philosophy, Research, and Practice to Advance Empirically-Engaged, Collaborative Normative Inquiry* Virtual Symposium, November 14, 2020 (Zoom).
- “Moral Costs of Cultural Code Switching for Black Men,” at the “Black Masculinities” panel, at the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division meeting, January 9, 2020 (Philadelphia, PA).
- “Pre-College Philosophy and Undergraduate Teaching: Lessons from Philosophy Camp” at the “Pre-College Philosophy as Pedagogy: Lessons for Teaching in Higher Education” panel at the

American Philosophical Association Eastern Division meeting, January 9, 2020 (Philadelphia, PA).

- “Rights Externalism, Institutional Disrespect, and the Persistent Mistreatment of Black Women,” Committee on the Status of Women, at the Philosophy of Education Society, March 23-25, 2018 (Chicago, IL). (Invited)
- “The Limits of Overcoming Injustice without Combatting Misrecognition,” at the American Philosophical Association Pacific Conference, March 28–April 1, 2018 (San Diego, CA). (Invited)
- “Pre-College Philosophy as A Means of Diversifying Philosophy,” at the American Philosophical Association Pacific Conference, April 13, 2017 (Seattle, WA). (Invited)
- “Philosophical Horizons and Why Pre-College Philosophy Matters,” at the Winning Words Initiative Conference on Pre-Collegiate Philosophy, University of Chicago, November 2, 2013 (Chicago, IL). (Invited)
- “Philosophical Horizons and Why Pre-College Philosophy Matters,” at the Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) Conference, Loyola University, February 19–20, 2013 (New Orleans, LA).

## **Teaching**

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### Assistant Professor (SUNY Buffalo State)

- Liberty vs. Equality (PHI 301) – Spring 2023
- Introduction to Ethics (PHI 102) – Fall 2023, Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Fall 2018
- African-American Philosophy: Race and Progress (PHI 361) – Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Spring 2019
- Africana Philosophy (PHI 360) – Spring 2023, Spring 2022, Spring 2021, Spring 2020

### Instructor (University of Memphis)

- Fundamental Issues in Philosophy (PHIL 1101) – Spring 2016
- Values in the Modern World (PHIL 1102) – Fall 2017, Spring 2017, Fall 2016, Spring 2015, Fall 2014
- Contemporary Moral Problems (PHIL 3411) – Summer 2016 (online), Summer 2015 (online)
- African-American Philosophy (PHIL 3741) – Fall 2015

### Instructor (Arkansas State University Mid-South)

- Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 2013) – Spring 2016, Fall 2015

### Teaching Assistant (University of Memphis)

- Values in the Modern World (PHIL 1102) – Fall 2013, Spring 2013, Fall 2009

- Feminist Theory (PHIL 3452) – Spring 2010
- Biomedical Ethics (PHIL 3514) – Spring 2014 (online), Fall 2010
- Modern Philosophy (PHIL 3002) – Spring 2011
- Fundamental Issues in Philosophy (PHIL 1101) – Fall 2012

### **Professional, Departmental, and College Service**

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#### Buffalo State

- President’s Institutional Innovation Advisory Council (2020-2022)
- Presidential Council on Equity and Campus Diversity (2020-current)
- Undergraduate Summer Research Fellowship Supervisor (2019)
- Philosophy Department Bylaws Committee (2019-current)
- School of Arts & Humanities Curriculum Committee (2019-2021)
- Phi Sigma Tau Induction Ceremony Keynote, “Four Myths about Philosophy” (Fall 2019)

#### Other Professional Service

- Commissioner, New York State Commission on 400 Years of African-American History (2022-2024)
- Member, City of Buffalo Board of Ethics (2022-2026)
- Commissioner, Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown’s Commission to Recommend Police Policy and Social Reconstruction (2020-2021)
- Review Board Member, *ex officio*, *Philosophy of Education* (2020)
- Reviewer, *Southern Journal of Philosophy* (2020)
- Reviewer, *Public Philosophy Journal* (2020)
- Reviewer, *Theory and Research in Education* (2020)
- American Philosophical Association Committee Member: Pre-College Instruction on Philosophy (2018-2021)
- Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) Board Member (2018-2021)
- PLATO Academic Advisory Board Member (2021-current)
- PLATO Awards Committee Member (2017–2018)
- Case Writer for the National High School Ethics Bowl Regional and National Competition (2016–2017)
- PhD Student President/Faculty Liaison: Acted as the representative for PhD students in philosophy, including establishing mentoring programs within the graduate student cohort, organizing graduate student participation for recruiting new PhD and MA students, and voicing our collective views to faculty. (2016-2017)
- Participating Member of Memphis Chapter of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) (2016–2018)
- Participating Member of Ida B. Wells Philosophical Association (2009–2011; 2012–2013)

- Program Coordinator, Philosophical Horizons: Setup weekly philosophy discussion sessions within various schools in the Memphis area and recruit/train volunteers. (2012-2017)
- M.A. Student President/Faculty Liaison: Acted as the representative for Masters students in philosophy, including being a mentor for first year M.A. students and voicing our collective views to faculty and PhD students. (2011-2012)

## **Conferences, Panels, & Professional Activities Organized**

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### Professional Activities

- Buffalo State Lyceum: A weeklong summer philosophy camp for 7-12<sup>th</sup> graders in the Buffalo area funded by grants from the APA and PLATO. July 8-12, 2019.
- Co-organizer with Josh Dohmen of the Philosophical Horizons Workshop on Philosophy Outside of the Classroom, University of Memphis, November 22, 2013 (Memphis, TN).

### Conferences

- Co-organizer with Corey Reed and Jasper St. Bernard of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Ida B. Wells Conference on “Philosophy Engaging the Experience of Minorities,” University of Memphis, April 20, 2018 (Memphis, TN).
- Co-organizer with Jordan Liz of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ida B. Wells Conference on “Philosophy Engaging the Experience of Minorities,” University of Memphis, November 18, 2016 (Memphis, TN).

### Panels

- Co-organizer with A.Y. Odedeyi and Sara Goering of “Justice in the Aftermath of Injustice: The Limits of Liberalism for People of Color,” a panel during the American Philosophical Association Pacific Conference, March 28–April 1, 2018 (San Diego, CA).

## **Conference Sessions Chaired**

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- APA Eastern Meeting, January 8, 2019 (New York, NY): Session – What’s the Value of Pre-College Philosophy? Views from Facilitators and Teachers
- APA Eastern Meeting, January 4, 2018 (Savannah, GA): Colloquium – Philosophy of Race and Identity
- 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Spindel Conference, September 22, 2017 (Memphis, TN)
- Society of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, October 21, 2017 (Memphis, TN): Session – Race, Gender, and Popular Music
- CSLEE Values and Leadership Conference, October 16, 2015 (State College, PA).
- APA Central Meeting, February 21, 2015 (St. Louis, MO): Colloquium – Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Race

## **Professional Associations**

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- American Philosophical Association (APA) 2013–current



- Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) 2013–current
- Philosophy of Education Society (PES) 2020-current

## **Languages**

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Spanish – advanced reading and speaking

## **References**

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Luvell Anderson – Associate Professor of Philosophy, Syracuse University

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Tommy Curry – Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh

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Remy Debes – Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Memphis

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Kris Phillips – Associate Professor of Philosophy, Southern Utah University

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Jason Grinnell – Professor of Philosophy, SUNY Buffalo State University

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