

CURRICULUM VITAE  
**David Pensgard**  
2019

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**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**

G.W.F. Hegel  
Ontological Arguments

**AREAS OF COMPETENCE**

Metaphysics / Ontology (Ancient – Contemporary)  
Philosophy of Religion  
Formal/Symbolic Logic  
Phenomenology (Husserl, Time Consciousness)  
Philosophy of Time (Ancient – Analytic – Continental)

**EDUCATION**

- |      |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2018 | PhD | Philosophy, Catholic University of America, School of Philosophy, Washington, D.C., Fall 2018. (COMPLETED)<br>Dissertation: <i>Hegel's Modal Ontological Argument</i><br>Advisor: Antón Barba-Kay, PhD Univ. of Chicago under Robert Pippin. |
| 2009 | MA  | Religious Studies, Liberty University, School of Philosophy and Religion Lynchburg, Virginia.<br>Thesis: <i>Existential Temporality as Fore-Ignorance: Implications for Divine Foreknowledge</i>                                             |
| 1996 | BA  | Double-Major: Neurobiology; Art Theory and Practice<br>Northwestern University, College of Arts and Sciences, Evanston, Illinois.                                                                                                            |

**ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT**

- |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2018-2019 | Northern Virginia Community College, Woodbridge, Virginia. Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Adjunct Status. Teaching <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> 101 and <i>Biomedical Ethics</i> 227. (hybrid courses: with classroom and online components). |
| 2009-2019 | Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. College of Arts and Sciences, Online Instructor of Philosophy, teaching <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , PHIL 201 and <i>Contemporary Worldviews</i> PHIL 104, 12 classes per year. Full-time adjunct.     |

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Online Education

- 2009-2019 PHIL 201: **Philosophy and Contemporary Ideas** (AKA: Introduction to Philosophy), Liberty University, College of General Studies, Department of Online Education. 110 individual courses taught.
- 2009-2010 PHIL 104: **Contemporary Worldviews**, Liberty University, College of General Studies, Department of Online Education. 2 individual courses taught.

### Classroom Education

- 2018-2019 PHI 101: **Introduction to Philosophy**. Northern Virginia Community College. 3 individual courses.
- PHI 227: **Biomedical Ethics**. Northern Virginia Community College. 3 individual courses.
- 2004-2009 Guest Lectures (various topics in Philosophy and Religious Studies). Liberty University. 29 individual lectures given.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Refereed Journal Articles

- 2018 "Hegel as Logician." (Submitted) *Owl of Minerva*, a Hegel Journal.
- 2006 "Yogacara Buddhism: A Sympathetic Description and Suggestion for Use in Western Theology and Philosophy of Religion." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 15 (2006): 94-103. <<http://www.jsri.ro>> ISSN 1583-0039.

### Theses and Dissertations

- 2018 "Hegel's Modal Ontological Argument." PhD Dissertation, School of Philosophy, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. (available upon request). Defended successfully, December 6, 2018.
- 2008 "Existential Temporality as Fore-Ignorance: Implications for Divine Foreknowledge." MA Thesis, Liberty University, School of Philosophy and Religion, Lynchburg, Virginia, November 2008. <<http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/masters/27/>>.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2009 The Bill Bright Excellence in Scholarship Award. Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, USA.

## **AREAS OF RESEARCH INTEREST**

Hegel in relation to historical philosophies and logical systems, contemporary relevance of Hegel (esp. regarding contemporary modal logic, ontological arguments, time, and evolution), metaphysics of time, phenomenology of internal-time consciousness, and the Philosophy of Religion (God and Time).

## **CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

- 2014 “Going Beyond Husserl’s Conception of The Structure of Internal-Time Consciousness.” 8th Annual Duquesne University Graduate Conference in Philosophy: Philosophy of Time, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. February 2014.
- 2009 “Presentist Time Travel and the Limits of Presentist Causality.” Presented to the *American Philosophical Association* Eastern Division, Philosophy of Time Society Group Meeting, New York City. December 2009.
- 2008 “Existential Temporality as Fore-Ignorance.” Presented at the *Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences 2008* as part of the *Society for Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture* (EPTC/TCEP). University of British Columbia, Canada. June 2008. Also served as moderator for another talk.

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

- 2005-2017 Research Assistant to Craig A. Evans, Payzant Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Acadia Divinity College of Acadia University, in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada. I managed publication materials and published documents for his classes online. NB: He is now at another institution, contact information below in Academic References.
- 2004-2017 Research Assistant to Gary Habermas, Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Theology, Liberty University. I helped grade papers, lectured in his classes, assisted him in preparing for and attending conferences, and consolidated his publications and research for his professional website. Contact information below.

## **SERVICE TO PROFESSION**

- 2005 Manuscript review for John Douglas Morrison, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Liberty University. *Has God Said? Scripture, the Word of God, and the Crisis of Theological Authority*. Volume 5 in the Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series, David W. Baker, main editor. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Pub., 2006.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES**

- 2006-2007 Helped establish a chapter of Phi Sigma Tau: International Honor Society in Philosophy, an undergraduate philosophy club. This was done while I was a graduate student at the Department of Philosophy and Theology, Liberty University. Served as vice president.

## LANGUAGES

French: Reading/Translating with dictionary  
German: Reading/Translating with dictionary  
(See “Milestones at CUA” below)

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

American Philosophical Association. Member since 2017.

Philosophy of Time Society. Member since 2007.

Phi Sigma Tau: International Honor Society in Philosophy, Liberty University Chapter, Serving as Vice President, 2006-2007.

## ACADEMIC REFERENCES (The first three provide letters of recommendation)

**Antón Barba-Kay** ([BarbaKay@CUA.edu](mailto:BarbaKay@CUA.edu))([website](#))  
(My Dissertation Director, University of Chicago Alumnus)  
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**Michael Rohlf** ([Rohlf@CUA.edu](mailto:Rohlf@CUA.edu))([website](#))  
(A Reader on my Dissertation Committee)  
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**Sean Turchin** ([SATurchin@Liberty.edu](mailto:SATurchin@Liberty.edu))  
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**Craig A. Evans** ([CEvans@HBU.edu](mailto:CEvans@HBU.edu))([website](#))  
John Bisagno Distinguished Professor of Christian Origins  
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**Craig Hinkson** ([CQHinkso@liberty.edu](mailto:CQHinkso@liberty.edu))([website](#))  
Professor of Philosophy & Theology (University of Chicago Alumnus)  
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**Gary Habermas** ([GHabermas@Liberty.edu](mailto:GHabermas@Liberty.edu))([website](#))

Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Theology  
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**Edward Martin** ([ENMartin@Liberty.edu](mailto:ENMartin@Liberty.edu))([website](#))

Co-Chairman, Department of Philosophy, Director: Master of Arts in Philosophical Studies  
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**Timothy Noone** ([NooneT@CUA.edu](mailto:NooneT@CUA.edu))([website](#))

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**Thomas Provenzola** ([TProvenzola@Liberty.edu](mailto:TProvenzola@Liberty.edu))([website](#))

Professor of Philosophy and Theology (previous position)  
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## SUPPLEMENTS

(The following three supplements are suggested by the American Philosophical Association guidelines for CVs.)

## LIST OF GRADUATE COURSES TAKEN

Total Graduate **Hours: 99**

- In Philosophy: **75**
- In Theology: **30** (with 2 classes overlapping)

**PhD Program in Philosophy:** Catholic University of America (2010-2013)

### **Class Title (Instructor)**

*Phaedo, Epicureans, and Stoics on Death* (Druart)  
*Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Wippel)  
*Substantial Unity (Mereology)* (Gorman)  
*Aristotle's Categories and On Interpretation* (De Groot)  
*Plotinus / Neoplatonism* (Vorwerk)  
*The Agent of Truth (Phenomenology of the Human Person)* (Sokolowski)  
*Hume's Religion* (McCarthy)  
*Modern German Phil: Leibniz – Dilthey* (Zaborowski)  
*Thought of William of Ockham* (Noone)  
*German Idealism* (Rohlf)  
*Aquinas on Divine Ideas (The Platonic Forms in the Mind of God)*(Doolan)  
*Husserl's Formal and Transcendental Logic* (Sokolowski)  
*Husserl's Cartesian Meditations* (Sokolowski)  
*Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (Rohlf)

**Milestones at CUA:**

First Comprehensive Exam (1/2): Subject Area: Ancient Philosophy (Fall 2011)  
Second Comprehensive Exam (2/2): Subject Area: Contemporary Philosophy (Spring 2013)  
Admitted to Candidacy on 08-26-2013 (Fall 2013)  
German Translation Exam Completed (Fall 2013)  
French Translation Exam Completed (Spring 2016)  
Dissertation Proposal Approved by Faculty (Spring 2016)  
Dissertation Draft 1 Completed (Spring 2017)  
Graduation Fall 2018

**Community Scholar Program:** University of Virginia, between MA and PhD (2008-2009)

*Metaphysics* (Merricks)  
*Experience* (Philosophy of Perception) (Langsam)

**MA in Religious Studies:** Liberty University (2004-2007)

*Kant Seminar* (Martin)  
*Epistemology* (Provenzola)  
*Symbolic Logic* (Martin)  
*Postmodernism/Existentialism* (Provenzola)  
*Eastern Philosophies* (Jones)  
*Metaphysics* (Martin)  
Kierkegaard Seminar (Hinkson)  
*Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (Martin)  
*Existence of God* (Beck)  
*Modern/Contemporary Christian Thought* (Morrison)  
*OT Orientation I* (Fowler)  
*NT Orientation I* (Freerkson)  
*Introduction to Apologetics* (Habermas)  
*Miracles* (Habermas)  
*Adv. Bibliology* (Morrison)  
*Adv. Christology* (Morrison)  
*Research Methods* (Martin/Miller)

**EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: COURSE EVALUATIONS**

For complete documentation, see attached documents. Or, visit <http://www.Pensgard.com/evaluations>  
NB: This is complete data, no omissions or gaps.

As a sample and summary of *all data* accumulated 2015-2017 from student evaluations as a sample, using data from 27 classes, the percentage breakdown of the three categories is 49.4% strongly positive, 42.9% positive, and 7.7% negative or strongly negative total. The result is that I have received a 92.3% positive rating from my students.

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT AND CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Applicant: David Pensgard

Dissertation Title: *Hegel's Modal Ontological Argument*

My research into Hegel's philosophy has led me to two surprising conclusions: first, Hegel's philosophy is thoroughly logical; second, his ontological argument (not for the existence of God, but for the unity of concepts and their objects) is the key to interpreting his entire system.

Hegel's philosophy is straightforwardly logical (syllogistic, deductive). Yet, contrary to what most Hegel scholars think, this is not a divergent species of "dialectic" logic; it is internally the very same logical apparatus that was discovered by Aristotle and developed by dozens of others. Hegel expands upon these logical achievements by providing grounding for concepts by means of their interconnection, and by eliminating presupposition. He then puts logic to its preeminent use in a *non-theological* ontological argument.

Hegel's ontological argument is the key to interpreting his entire philosophy. It is, in fact, the interpretational framework that Hegel himself has provided. Without understanding this argument, Hegel's philosophy is hopelessly inaccessible. The topic at hand is therefore no tangential or minor issue for Hegel scholarship, which after nearly 200 years of interpretative efforts is still attempting to settle what Hegel's philosophy is even about.

Hegel's ontological argument is unusual in two ways. To start, Hegel broadens the category of ontological argumentation beyond the medieval Christian context. His use of such arguments is not limited to a religious context or to the existence of God. Instead, Hegel's expansion of ontological argumentation extends it to include any effort to deductively unify concepts with their objects. It is by means of this unification that Hegel intends to ground logic first, and then *all* knowledge. Therefore, the Ontological Argument, to Hegel, is a means of grounding knowledge philosophically rather than proving a theological principle.

In addition, Hegel's own ontological argument is a deductive syllogism. Contrary to the expectations of virtually every Hegel scholar today, Hegel does not rule out the use of formal logic. Instead, he has worked to repair certain flaws in the practice of formal logic that had led to a dogmatic *application* of logic. Hegel uses traditional terms for his logical argument such as "syllogism," "deduction," "demonstration," and "proof," and he does so without irony or accommodation. Hegel's ontological argument is part of a rich tradition that he respects and deeply comprehends, and so it must not be understood as something set apart from the logic of Aristotle and developed by the Stoics, the Scholastics, Ockham, and Leibniz, to name but a few. Hegel shows evidence of a deep understanding of all of these logicians, and even though he gave a thorough critique of traditional, formal logic, his subsequent development of the science of logic was not meant to overwrite or cancel past advancements in this field. His efforts were meant to rehabilitate the use of formal logic and remove from its practice the avoidable pitfalls of dogmatism.

This rehabilitation is pursued through solutions to specific criticisms that Hegel worked to overcome. He refers to them as *presupposition* and *finitude*. Presupposition is the undemonstrated acceptance of an axiom or rule of inference with no reasonable support. Dogmatism clearly results from presupposition because it leads to arbitrary starting points and choices of methodologies. Presupposition is overcome, thinks Hegel, when the rules, tools, and contents used by a logician are grounded, connected, and derived within a self-supporting system.

Finitude is the second criticism, which is Hegel's term for the division and isolation of concepts from one another and from their objects. In a word, this is disconnectedness. Finitude is overcome when concepts are connected to one another and to their objects.

Hegel's philosophy involves an extensive program of reconnection for concepts, which is to say, the logician's recognition of connections that are already there. In this way, Hegel's philosophy provides remedies for these two problems, which means that Hegel was able to overcome the source of the dogmatism that he believed had plagued the traditional uses of logic from Aristotle to Leibniz.

Most interpreters of Hegel have made the decision to rule out the possibility that Hegel's philosophy could make use of syllogistic reasoning. However, this presumes an understanding of Hegel's philosophy that remains, even today, unsettled. If this surmise depends on what Hegel's philosophy is seeking to accomplish and if interpreters are still attempting to establish what Hegel's philosophy is about, then this common belief ought not be placed beyond suspicion. This common belief that Hegel abandons and replaces traditional logic is not supported well enough to forbid a new investigation. The field should be open to new evidence. We must therefore ask anew whether Hegel really meant to reject and replace formal logic. If a good case can be made that he meant to repair the traditional approach to logic instead of trying to abandon it, and if a coherent philosophy can be detected in light of this alternative, or even because of it, then the investigation should be worth the effort.

With this and other arguments, and with much textual exegesis, my project works to establish the legitimacy of reading Hegel as a logician capable of using advanced syllogistics. I then collect evidence from Hegel's writings, primarily the *Encyclopedia Logic*, showing that Hegel's ontological argument both exists and that it can be reconstructed and tested as a modal disjunctive syllogism. Only when this is done can Hegel scholarship find its proper starting place.

## Chapter Summaries

Chapter (I) has two major parts, a listing of factors that might obscure our view of Hegel's ontological argument as a preparation for exegesis, and second, the textual analysis itself.

Regarding the first part, it is difficult to find and analyze Hegel's ontological argument because several factors obscure it from detection: its lack of a formalized presentation; the subtlety of the primary text; and its similarity with another well-known Hegelian argument, known alternately as the Identity Thesis and the Absolute Identity Thesis.

With regard to the lack of a formalized presentation, Hegel's own ontological argument is not presented with the now-expected signs of formal deduction. The numbered lines, the explicit stating of standardized rules of inference, the special symbols, and the expected verbal signs of well-worn classes of inferences are all missing. Hegel does his syllogizing without such signposts. Yet, most of these signs were established after Hegel's lifetime. Thus, to expect such indicators would be inappropriate. A reader must learn to see deductions without such aids.

The second reason that Hegel's ontological argument has been difficult to identify is that his most clear and direct text on the subject, the *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* (VBDG), does not present his own argument in a straightforward manner. It appears only to address past versions of the argument. After this, there is no separate presentation of his own argument as such. For this reason, many conclude that he has no argument of his own. My contention, in response, is that this lecture and its analysis, *taken as a whole*, represents his argument and that its ability to incorporate past forms of thought into distinct stages is itself evidence of his intentions to produce his own argument in the form of a



disjunctive syllogism. Hegel divides past ontological arguments into two historical stages. These historical categories are then transformed into premises within Hegel's own ontological argument. The first two historical stages are negated, and the only remaining option, Hegel's own philosophy, is selected by elimination. Thus, it is a disjunctive syllogism.

Specifically, his presentation and rejection of stage-one ontological arguments (Anselm, for example) and then stage-two ontological arguments (Descartes, for example) align with the negated premises of a disjunctive argument of the following form:  $\sim(\sim A)$ ;  $\sim(A \vee \sim A)$ ;  $(A)$ . Option A represents Hegel's own position. The first category of ontological arguments (Anselm) rejects A. Anselm, therefore, posits  $\sim A$ . Hegel rejects the rejection by negating it a second time:  $\sim(\sim A)$ . This brings Anselm into line with Hegel's position:  $\sim(\sim A)$  reduces to A. The same process repeats for the second category of ontological arguments (Descartes). This group does not reject A but it does doubt it, and is thus unsure if A is true or not. This is represented by  $(A \vee \sim A)$ . Hegel rejects and negates this as well:  $\sim(A \vee \sim A)$ . To make this align with A, however, it must be read in the following way: "It is not the case that it is *merely* possible that A or not A is the case." Hegel thinks of his own position as a *necessary* truth. The mere possibility of A must then be negated due to the necessity of A, thus:  $\sim(A \vee \sim A)$ . In this way, the first two historical stages align with the first negated stages of a disjunctive syllogism. Hegel's own position, A, is the third premise, and this is represented by the entire lecture including its analysis of past forms of ontological argument. That is, the analysis itself is an argument that takes the following simplified form: not category 1, not category 2, therefore category 3; this matches the form of the disjunctive syllogism that Hegel derives in the *Logics*. The lecture itself, by describing and negating two categories of ontological arguments, represents a third category itself. It is not only Hegel's analysis of past arguments, but it also takes the shape of an ontological argument itself.

The third reason that Hegel's ontological argument is often missed is that it is inappropriately distinguished from his absolute identity thesis. This thesis is understood to be the core engine of his entire philosophy even though a consensus about his philosophy's purpose has not yet been reached. My position is that Hegel's absolute identity thesis is his ontological argument. They are the same argument. If this is true, then the goals and methods that are seen in his ontological argument can serve as aids in interpreting his absolute identity thesis, which is to say, his entire philosophy. Not only does this realization allow for his ontological argument to be identified in many other texts, but it drives interpretation of Hegel's entire philosophy toward a formal-logical reading. This may help to overcome a contemporary impasse in Hegel interpretation and it opens Hegel up to an unusual degree of contemporary relevance.

Two texts will then be explored in depth in the search for clues and "raw data" for Hegel's argument: the lecture just mentioned (VBDG) and the *Encyclopedia Logic*. This is the bulk of the chapter.

Chapter (II) attempts to support the conclusion that comes from the raw data in Chapter I. That data seems to indicate, upon first reading, that Hegel means to present his system in the form of a deductive syllogism. Chapter II will support this view, rather than explain it away, by reviewing Hegel's critique of formal logic.

This review will be prefaced by a revelation of the advanced state of formal logic in Hegel's day along with its paradoxical lack of popularity and progressive loss. This is followed by evidence that Hegel had a very advanced understanding of formal logic himself despite a nearly overwhelming trend at that time to discredit it. With this background, Hegel's critique of formal logic is explored in depth. As mentioned above, it will be shown that his primary accusation is that logicians of the past had succumbed

to the errors of presupposition and finitude. In other terms, they presuppose the concepts that they use to do logic and this results in unavoidable dogmatism. Hegel's solution, however, does not destroy the syllogism; it merely removes the shroud of dogmatism by connecting concepts together and demonstrating necessarily that, when systematized, they can be their own ground. This overcomes presupposition by means of demonstration, and it overcomes finitude (isolation) by means of interconnectedness. The chapter goes on to discuss several implications of this result and interacts with some of the relevant literature.

Chapter (III) gets deeper into the logical form of his ontological argument and absolute identity thesis, which are the same thing. This form, the Disjunctive Syllogism, is derived at great pains by Hegel in the *Logics*. In this chapter, the derivation of this syllogism is then traced at a sufficient level of detail. Some interaction with helpful resources guides the way.

After its derivation is fully described, the properties, position, and function of the Disjunctive Syllogism are discussed next. It behaves for Hegel as a mediator of concept and being. Yet this syllogism is itself a concept. Consequently, it acts as the mediator of itself with its own object. And, its object is itself. It is thus able to unify its contents with its form, the first of the forms of thought to be able to accomplish this feat. Hegel states plainly that the sole activity of thought is to think itself. Therefore it follows that the Disjunctive Syllogism is the preeminent form of this activity.

One final characteristic of this form of syllogism is then described to close the chapter, its inherent modality. Not only does the Disjunctive Syllogism include within its disjunctive judgment ( $A \vee \sim A$ ) a reference to possibility, but the largest context in which Hegel applies this syllogism is absolute, implying that the other premises must involve necessity. Thus, the possibility of the above premise and the necessity of the others (one negated the other demonstrated) is shown to be implicit. The result is therefore a modal disjunctive syllogism:

$$\sim(\Box \sim A); \sim\Diamond (A \vee \sim A); \Box (A)$$

Chapter (IV) delves more deeply into the complete modal syllogism as such and describes the universal accessibility it naturally provides to itself. I spend some time exploring similar neo-Hegelian arguments. I use these arguments for comparison as I construct a proof of the Hegelian ontological argument that I have drawn directly from Hegel's own words. This reconstruction and proof establishes the validity of Hegel's ontological argument.

At the end of the chapter, I also consider the argument's soundness and find it, in the end, lacking something important. I then suggest a way forward for the argument as my conclusion. This way forward involves additional "rounds" of sublation added to Hegel's system, additions which seem to indicate that Hegel had stopped prematurely. Once the additional steps are taken, however, the conclusion of Hegel's philosophy, pursued by its own rules, is very different from the conclusion that Hegel recommended. These points will thrust Hegel and the consequences of his system into contemporary philosophical relevance.

The full text of completed and defended dissertation is now available on ProQuest.