

# Sumeet Patwardhan

---

---

[sumeetcp@umich.edu](mailto:sumeetcp@umich.edu)

[www.sumeet.patwardhan.com](http://www.sumeet.patwardhan.com)

University of Michigan, Department of Philosophy  
2215 Angell Hall, 435 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

## RESEARCH

---

### Specializations

Ethics and Moral Psychology; Feminist Philosophy; Social Philosophy

### Competencies

Political Philosophy; Indian Philosophy; Philosophy of Race

## EDUCATION

---

University of Michigan – Ann Arbor expected 2023  
Ph.D. in Philosophy  
Dissertation: Sex, Blame, and Consent  
Committee: Ishani Maitra (Chair); Sarah Buss; Renée Jorgensen; Scott Hershovitz

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 2017  
B.A. in Philosophy and Minor in Creative Writing (Poetry)  
Thesis in Poetry Writing (Highest Honors): *Sonder*  
Advisor: Alan Shapiro

## WORKS IN PROGRESS

---

Dissertation: Sex, Blame, and Consent  
Sulking into Sex: Blame, Coercion, and Consent (Ch. 1) R&R, *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*  
Do I Have To?: Moral Ignorance and Consent (Ch. 2) draft available  
Nonconsensual Sex without Public Sanctions (Ch. 3) in progress

### Additional Papers

Consent, Fairness, and Friendship in progress  
Peremptory Blame in progress  
“What I See with My Eyes”: Tarabai Shinde on Men Blaming Women in progress  
Stalking by Withdrawing in progress

## AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

---

Rackham Merit Fellowship (RMF) 2017-present  
UM Graduate School fellowship, awarding funding and professional development for students with exceptional potential for disciplinary success and wider contributions.

USC Conceptual Foundations of Conflict Project (CFCP), Affiliated Graduate Fellow 2021-2022  
USC-based project on the philosophy of interpersonal conflict, regularly hosting pre-read workshops, public talks, and conferences.

Rackham Graduate School Conference Travel Grant 2019, 2022  
UM Graduate School grant for conference travel funding, awarded via application.

Last updated December 2022

<b>Weinberg Dissertation Fellowship</b> UM Philosophy prize, awarded annually to graduate students who show distinction in their first five years of study.	2022
<b>DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Prize</b> UM Philosophy prize, awarded annually to one to two students for sustained DEI work.	2022
<b>SPLICE (Special Prize for Leadership in Co-Curricular Enrichment) Prize</b> UM Philosophy prize, awarded annually to one to two students for outstanding contributions to cocurricular and service work.	2021
<b>Faculty Prize for Excellence in Teaching</b> UM Philosophy prize, awarded annually to one student for outstanding teaching.	2020
<b>Mellon Foundation Grant</b> UM grant, awarding additional funding in the first two years of the Ph.D. program.	2017-2019
<b>Robertson Scholarship</b> Full-ride <a href="#">scholarship</a> , awarded annually to about twenty students each at UNC and Duke, who demonstrate potential to make transformative contributions to society.	2013-2017
<b>Philosophy Department Graduation Ceremony Speaker</b> UNC Class of 2017 undergraduate speaker.	2017
<b>Robert B. House Memorial Prize in Poetry</b> UNC prize, awarded annually to one graduating senior for distinguished work in poetry.	2017
<b>Ertegun Scholarship (declined)</b> Oxford-based <a href="#">scholarship</a> for graduate study in the humanities, awarded annually to fifteen highly qualified students.	2017
<b>Finalist for the Rhodes Scholarship</b> Oxford-based <a href="#">scholarship</a> for graduate study, awarded annually to one hundred students who demonstrate outstanding intellect, character, leadership, and dedication to service.	2017

## PRESENTATIONS

---

<b>Comments on “Attraction, Aversion, and Meaning in Life” (Alisabeth Ayars)</b> <i>Vancouver Summer Philosophy Conference at the University of British Columbia – Vancouver</i>	July 2022
<b>“Do I Have To? Moral Ignorance and Consent”</b> <i>Vienna Forum for Analytic Philosophy Graduate Conference on ‘Knowledge, Ignorance, and Moral Responsibility’ at the University of Vienna</i>	July 2022
<i>Georgia Philosophical Society Spring Conference at the University of Georgia</i>	June 2022
<i>Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop at MIT</i>	April 2022
<i>Southeastern Graduate Philosophy Conference at the University of Florida</i>	April 2022
<i>Great Lakes Philosophy Conference at Siena Heights University</i>	April 2022
<i>University of Michigan Philosophy Graduate Student Working Group</i>	October 2020
<b>“Nonconsensual Sex without Public Sanctions”</b> <i>University of Michigan Philosophy Graduate Student Working Group</i>	March 2022
<b>“Peremptory Blame”</b> <i>University of Michigan Philosophy Graduate Student Working Group</i>	March 2022

<p>““What I See with My Eyes”: Tarabai Shinde on Men Blaming Women” University of Michigan COMPASS Workshop</p>	October 2021
<p>“Sulking into Sex: Blame, Coercion, and Consent” Minorities and Philosophy Summer Flash Talk Series University of Michigan Philosophy Graduate Student Working Group</p>	May 2020 April 2019
<p>“Our Philosophical Canon Enacts Testimonial Injustice” 'Silence, Prejudice, and Resistance' Minorities and Philosophy Workshop at the University of Stirling</p>	June 2019
<p>Comments on “Objectification and Domination” (Aleksy Tarasenko-Struc) Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress at The University of Colorado – Boulder</p>	August 2019
<p>Comments on “Are Normative Reasons Normative?” (Julien Dutant; Clayton Littlejohn) University of Michigan ‘Epistemology: Norms and Values’ Spring Colloquium</p>	February 2019
<p>Comments on “A Race Theory for Medical Genetics” (Quayshawn Spencer) University of Michigan ‘Science, Values, and the Public’ Spring Colloquium</p>	February 2018
<p>“Memorial Injustice” University of Michigan Philosophy Graduate Student Working Group</p>	November 2017

## TEACHING

---

<p><b>Instructor of Record</b> PHIL 361, Ethics</p>	Summer 2021
<p><b>Discussion Section Instructor</b> PHIL 383, Knowledge and Reality (for Brian Weatherson) PHIL 355, Contemporary Moral Problems (for Dan Lowe) PHIL 160, Moral Principles and Problems (for Dan Jacobson) PPE 300, Introduction to Political Economy (for Meena Krishnamurthy) PHIL 183, Introduction to Critical Reasoning (for David Manley)</p>	Fall 2022 Spring 2020 Fall 2019 Spring 2019 Fall 2018
<p><b>Teaching Development and Mentorship</b> Graduate Student Instructional Consultant (<b>GSIC</b>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As one of twenty-three GSICs employed by UM’s Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, I provide teaching support and facilitate classroom observations for graduate instructors across the university, and I participate in a GSIC learning community focused on pedagogical development.</li> </ul>	Summer 2022-present
<p>Graduate Student Teacher Certificate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UM <a href="#">certificate</a>, documenting development in college teaching, including participation in pedagogy seminars, course observations, consultations on teaching philosophies, and mentorships on teaching.</li> </ul>	Spring 2022
<p>Graduate Student Department Teaching Mentor (<b>GSM</b>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As one of two GSMs in the Philosophy Department, I assisted with teaching orientations for new graduate instructors; I observed them teach and gave feedback; and I gave teaching support to all graduate instructors, by holding one-on-one meetings and by co-facilitating pedagogy workshops about philosophy teaching.</li> </ul>	Fall 2021-Spring 2022
<p>Factotum for Telluride Association Summer Program (<b>TASP</b>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TASP is a free, six-week educational experience for high school juniors. TASPers participate in a rigorous daily seminar while also building a robust, democratic community. I was one of two ‘factotums’ – i.e., a seminar teaching assistant and overall program facilitator – at the Cornell location. There, I was attached to the seminar ‘Facing Fictions’, taught by Blakey Vermeule and William Flesch.</li> </ul>	Summer 2018

## DEPARTMENTAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

---

<b>Co-Coordinator, Race, Gender, and Feminist Philosophy Workshop (RGFP)</b> Co-coordinated a twice-monthly, interdisciplinary reading group; organized two to four speaker events per year.	2019-2022
<b>Judge, Michigan High School Ethics Bowl</b> Judged preliminary and elimination rounds for the <a href="#">Ethics Bowl</a> .	2019-2022
<b>Mentor, Philosophy Department First-Year Mentorship Program</b> Participated in the first-year student mentorship program.	2019-2020
<b>Co-Coordinator, COMPASS Workshop</b> Co-coordinated a workshop for students from a diversity of backgrounds who are considering graduate school in philosophy. <a href="#">COMPASS</a> takes place over a weekend, including multiple seminar-style discussions, faculty and graduate student panels on admissions and graduate life, graduate student research presentations, formal mentorship for attendees, and informal networking and socializing.	2017-2019
<b>Co-Coordinator, Graduate Student Working Group</b> Co-coordinated weekly graduate student talks on works in progress.	2018-2019
<b>Coach, Michigan High School Ethics Bowl</b> Coached Ethics Bowl team at Meadow Montessori High School.	2017-2018

## UNIVERSITY SERVICE

---

<b>Member, Graduate Employees' Organization</b> Participated in union organizing as a member of the Graduate Employees' Organization ( <a href="#">GEO</a> ). GEO is Local 3550 of the American Federation of Teachers, representing graduate employees at the University of Michigan.	2017-present
<b>President, Graduate Employees' Organization</b> Facilitated effective, sustainable, and democratic union organizing during the height of the pandemic. Responsibilities included: coordinating efforts across a vast network of members, stewards, committees, caucuses, working groups, officers, full-time and part-time staff, and union allies; leading pandemic-related contractual negotiations; chairing meetings with upwards of one thousand union members; advancing strategy development; managing a high-volume email inbox; and addressing time-sensitive needs.	2020-2021
<b>Bargaining Committee Co-Chair, Graduate Employees' Organization</b> Co-organized year-long negotiations with the university relating to graduate student living and working conditions. Responsibilities included: coordinating research teams; facilitating democratic decision-making; presenting updates on negotiations to members and allies; organizing events; and contributing to big-picture strategizing.	2019-2020
<b>Grievance Committee Member, Graduate Employees' Organization</b> Helped graduate students learn about and access contractual rights and protections.	2018-2019

## PUBLIC SERVICE

---

<b>Board-Member, Telluride Association</b> Served on the Board of Directors of the <a href="#">Telluride Association</a> , a nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to prepare and inspire promising students to lead and serve through free, transformative educational experiences rooted in critical thinking and democratic community.	2018-present
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------

<b>Finance and Budget Committee Chair, Telluride Association</b> Facilitated move to a multi-year budgeting process; developed and proposed a new long-term investment and spending policy.	2020-present
<b>Finance and Budget Committee Member, Telluride Association</b> Ensured financially responsible budgeting and spending; created budgetary literacy materials for board members.	2019-2020
<b>Summer Program Committee Member, Telluride Association</b> Oversaw hiring of facilitators for high school educational programs; helped with logistical planning for those programs.	2018-2019
<b>Secretary, Telluride Association</b> Took minutes and ensured quorum for board meetings.	2018-2019

## GRADUATE COURSEWORK

---

Directed Readings on Blame and Sexual Consent (Ishani Maitra)  
Directed Readings on Indian Philosophy of Oppression (Meena Krishnamurthy)  
Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Janum Sethi)  
Language, Ideology, and Ideologues (Eric Swanson)  
Attunement to Reasons (Peter Railton)  
Consent and Coercion (Scott Hershovitz and Sarah Moss)  
The American Carceral State (Heather Ann Thompson, History and Afroamerican and African Studies)  
Colonialism, Past and Present (Meena Krishnamurthy)  
Stoic Philosophy of Mind and Language (Victor Caston)  
Racial Injustice in Education (Derrick Darby)  
Intersectionality (Charlotte Karem Albrecht, American Culture and Women's and Gender Studies)  
Formal Methods in Philosophy (Sarah Moss)  
Moral Epistemology (Elizabeth Anderson)  
Proseminar (Eric Swanson)

## REFERENCES

---

### Research:

Ishani Maitra  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Michigan  
imaitra@umich.edu

Sarah Buss  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Michigan  
sbuss@umich.edu

Renée Jorgensen  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
University of Michigan  
rjorgen@umich.edu

Scott Hershovitz  
Thomas G. and Mabel Long Professor of Law;  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Michigan  
sahersh@umich.edu

### Teaching:

Dan Lowe  
Lecturer of Philosophy  
University of Michigan  
danlowe@umich.edu

Meena Krishnamurthy  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Queen's University  
meena.krishnamurthy@queensu.ca

My dissertation concerns consent and blame. Drawing on real stories, mostly involving sexual interactions, I argue that it takes more to respect each other's consent in close relationships than in distant ones. Close relationships thereby enable subtle kinds of nonconsensual sex – like sex induced by blame or guilt-tripping. So too do they enable subtle kinds of nonconsensual nonsexual activities. For this reason, when we theorize about consent, we should attend to relationships. Conversely, when we explore the moral life of relationships, we should attend to consent. Consent protects against moral violations of authority – even when those violations are more intimate, nuanced, and quotidian, and even when those violations should not be legally sanctioned.

Ch. 1 (“Sulking into Sex: Blame, Coercion, and Consent”) concerns coerced consent. I focus on a behavior that has its home in relationships: sulking. To start, I characterize ‘sulking’ as angrily withdrawing while remaining attentionally proximate. Ripe for broader philosophical exploration, sulking is also relevant to issues of consent. Sometimes, people sulk – say, by initiating a silent treatment – when their partners refuse sex. To avoid such sulking, those on the receiving end sometimes submit to sex they don't want. This sex, I argue, is often *nonconsensual because coerced*. After all, a sufficient condition for coercion is, roughly, that the victim submits to avoid being wronged. And sulking due to sexual refusal often involves *wrongful blame*: the victim suffers blame's harms without doing anything wrong. Other pressures can also leverage wrongful blame to induce sexual – and even nonsexual – activities. Accordingly, sulking is just one of many subtle pressures that can coercively undermine both sexual and nonsexual consent.

Ch. 2 (“Do I Have To?: Moral Ignorance and Consent”) concerns informed consent. Clearly, *non-moral* ignorance can undermine consent, as when a partner hides an STD to secure sex. But can *moral* ignorance also do so, as when a partner deceives you into seeing sex as a marital duty? The answer, I argue, is ‘yes’. The best explanations of how non-moral ignorance can undermine consent appeal to broad features of consent; they do not rely on the ignorance being non-moral. For instance, some explanations appeal to consent's link to autonomy, but moral and non-moral ignorance can both hinder autonomy. Such explanations thereby generalize to the moral case. I go on to rebut objections to this generalization. Say, for example, that moral information is always accessible; consenters can always correct moral ignorance by deliberating better. Does that imply that consent-receivers are not responsible for consent that stems from moral ignorance? No: even when non-moral ignorance can be corrected, it can still undermine consent, so the same should hold for the moral case. Consider a doctor who hides a surgery's risks to secure consent. That surgery is nonconsensual, even if the patient could look up the risks themselves. I conclude that *moral ignorance can undermine sexual and nonsexual consent*. Discussions of moral ignorance overly focus on exculpation; discussions of consent overly focus on non-moral ignorance.

Ch. 3 (“Nonconsensual Sex without Public Sanctions”) concerns sanctions for nonconsensual sex. It's widely believed that nonconsensual sex warrants not just a victim's blame, but also public sanctions like criminal punishment and social censure. However, in cases like those in Ch. 1-2 – cases of subtly pressured or morally misinformed sex – public sanctions can seem inappropriate. Are these cases consensual after all? No, I argue. I start by noting the common-sense view that not all wrongs should be publicly sanctioned. This view rests on varied considerations: privacy; prioritization of egregious wrongs; costs of public sanctions; a victim's interest in controlling the reparative process; etc. These considerations, I argue, equally apply to non-sexual wrongs, sexual wrongs in general, and nonconsensual sex in particular. Put another way, I see consent's aim as protecting a consenter's authority. But when authority has less import than the considerations above – e.g., when legal and social sanctions are too intrusive or costly – public sanctions are not apt. Thus, *we need not become overly punitive to recognize that sex can be subtly nonconsensual*.