

**Ian J. Martel**  
Curriculum Vitae

<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	Department of Philosophy Harvard University Cambridge, MA 02138	<a href="mailto:imartel@g.harvard.edu">imartel@g.harvard.edu</a> <a href="mailto:ianjmartel@gmail.com">ianjmartel@gmail.com</a> +1 (802) 399-7453
<b>AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION</b>	Kant and post-Kantian philosophy, twentieth century continental philosophy, twentieth century analytic philosophy, pragmatism	
<b>AREAS OF COMPETENCE</b>	Early modern philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology	
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>Harvard University</b> PhD, Philosophy Dissertation: <i>Critical Metaphilosophy</i> Committee: Sean Kelly, Samantha Matherne, Warren Goldfarb	2015-2024 (expected)
	<b>Harvard University</b> MA, Philosophy Thesis: "Ontology, Philosophy, and the Human Element" Advisor: Sean Kelly	2015-2021
	<b>University of Vermont</b> BA, Philosophy and English, 2009-2014	2009-2014
<b>DISSERTATION ABSTRACT</b>	An investigation into the prospects for <i>critical metaphilosophy</i> , the idea that traditional philosophy violates the conditions of its own intelligibility. After giving an account of its history from Kant to analytic and continental philosophy, I turn to two historically recurring problems for the idea. First is a tendency toward anti-realism, which I address by working through the important attempts at <i>critical realism</i> by Kant, Heidegger, and Putnam. Second is a tendency toward self-undermining, which I address by working through the important attempts at <i>metacritique</i> by post-Kantians, Davidson, and Wittgenstein.	

<b>AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS</b>	Bechtel Prize in Philosophy, Harvard University	AY 2020-21
	for best essay on a philosophical topic	
	Certificate of Distinction for Teaching, Harvard University	Spring 2021
	Certificate of Distinction for Teaching, Harvard University	Fall 2020
	Sosland Family Graduate Fellowship, Harvard University	Spring 2018
	John Dewey Prize in Philosophy, University of Vermont	May 2014
	for outstanding undergraduate work in philosophy	
	Phi Beta Kappa, University of Vermont	May 2014
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	“Kant and Critical Metaphilosophy” Kant Graduate Student Forum, Harvard University	December 2022
<b>TEACHING</b>	<b>Sole Instructor</b>	
	Tutorial: Dissolving Skepticism	Spring 2023
	Tutorial: Pragmatism	Fall 2023
	Tutorial: Between Realism and Relativism	Spring 2022
	Tutorial: Dissolving Skepticism	Fall 2021
	Tutorial: Pragmatism	Spring 2021
	<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	
	The True and the Good, Bernhard Nickel	Fall 2020
	Reclaiming Argument: Logic as a Force for Good, Ned Hall	Spring 2020
	Heidegger’s <i>Being and Time</i> , Sean Kelly	Spring 2019
	Existentialism in Literature and Film, Sean Kelly	Fall 2018
	Later Heidegger, Sean Kelly	Spring 2018
	Logical Reasoning, Ned Hall	Fall 2017
	<b>Grader</b>	
	The Philosophy of Psychology, Luke Ciancarelli	Summer 2020
	Existentialism, Luke Ciancarelli	Summer 2020
<b>GRADUATE COURSEWORK</b>	German Idealism, Sean Kelly*	Fall 2023
	Kantian and Post-Kantian Theories of Freedom, Sean Kelly & Samantha Matherne*	Spring 2023
	Self-Knowledge and Reflection, Richard Moran*	Spring 2023
	Wittgenstein, Warren Goldfarb*	Fall 2022
	The Philosophy of Bernard Williams, Richard Moran**	Fall 2022
	Heidegger’s Nietzsche, Sean Kelly*	Spring 2022

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\* audited

\*\* read along

Conceptual Engineering, Mark Richard**	Spring 2022
The British Empiricists & Company, Jeffrey McDonough**	Spring 2021
Beyond Dualism: Descartes & His Critics, Alison Simmons**	Spring 2021
Philosophy, Genealogy, History, Michael Rosen & Sean Kelly*	Fall 2020
The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein, Warren Goldfarb**	Spring 2020
Ordinary Language Philosophy, Warren Goldfarb*	Fall 2019
The Rationalists, Jeffrey McDonough**	Fall 2019
Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Samantha Matherne**	Fall 2019
Phenomenology of Lived Experience, Samantha Matherne**	Spring 2019
Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Samantha Matherne*	Fall 2018
The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein, Richard Moran*	Spring 2018
Instructional Styles in Philosophy 2, Bernhard Nickel	Spring 2018
Instructional Styles in Philosophy 1, Bernhard Nickel	Fall 2017
Wittgenstein's <i>Tractatus</i> , Warren Goldfarb*	Fall 2017
Medieval Philosophy, Jeffrey McDonough*	Fall 2017
From Frege to Gödel, Warren Goldfarb*	Spring 2017
Philosophy and Literature: Proust, Richard Moran*	Spring 2017
Marx and Marxism, Tommie Shelby	Spring 2017
Heidegger's <i>Being and Time</i> , Sean Kelly	Spring 2017
Philosophy in Translation 2: French, Richard Moran	Spring 2017
Philosophy in Translation 1: French, Richard Moran	Fall 2016
Hume's Ethical Theory, Christine Korsgaard	Fall 2016
Plato's <i>Republic</i> , Rusty Jones	Fall 2016
Frege, Russell, and the Early Wittgenstein, Warren Goldfarb	Fall 2016
Quine, Warren Goldfarb	Spring 2016
Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , Matthew Boyle	Spring 2016
Logic and Philosophy, Warren Goldfarb	Spring 2016
First Year Colloquium 2: Metaethics, Selim Berker	Spring 2016
First Year Colloquium 1: Perception & Epistemology, Susanna Siegel & Susanna Rinard	Fall 2015
Nietzsche, Peter Burgard	Fall 2015
The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein, Warren Goldfarb	Fall 2015
Stoicism, James Doyle*	Fall 2015

<b>READING GROUPS</b>	Kant Reading Group, Samantha Matherne	Fall 2019 – Fall 2023
	Descombes Reading Group, Richard Moran	Spring 2023
	Pragmatism Reading Group, Zachary Gabor	Summer 2020

<b>LANGUAGES</b>	English (native), French (intermediate), German (reading), Russian (beginner), Ancient Greek (beginner)
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## REFERENCES

Sean Kelly (dissertation committee chair)

Teresa G. and Ferdinand F. Martignetti Professor of Philosophy

Department of Philosophy, Harvard University

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Samantha Matherne (dissertation committee member)

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Warren Goldfarb (dissertation committee member)

W. B. Pearson Professor of Mathematics and Mathematical Logic

Department of Philosophy, Harvard University

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Bernhard Nickel (teaching reference)

Department Chair, Professor of Philosophy

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

### Critical Metaphilosophy

An investigation into the nature of, and especially, the prospects for *critical metaphilosophy*, the idea that traditional philosophy violates the conditions of its own intelligibility.

One virtue of philosophy is that it is self-reflective. Part of the project of philosophizing is considering the nature, scope, and limits of that very project. Historically, this kind of self-reflection has led some philosophers to the startling conclusion that philosophy is incapable of its traditional aspirations (e.g., acquiring knowledge of the world through *a priori* means). However, when these philosophers try to articulate a view that accommodates the conclusion, they tend to run into problems – often ones strikingly similar to those they raise for traditional philosophy.

In its distinctively post-Kantian form, the diagnosis is that philosophers have traditionally tried to do something that can't be done because of certain limits to thought or language. In the introduction, I give an account of this idea – which I call *critical metaphilosophy* – and its varied history from Kant into analytic and continental philosophy. The rest of the dissertation is devoted to addressing two historically recurring problems for versions of critical metaphilosophy.

The first problem is their anti-realistic tendency. The basic insight of critical metaphilosophy is that our concepts are not autonomous. Their proper application is grounded in and so limited by our experience or activity. This threatens to leave us incapable of applying our concepts beyond the field of all our experience and activity, which would make it unintelligible for us to affirm that things exist independently of ourselves.

I approach this problem by working through three important attempts at *critical realism*: Kant's empirical realism, Heidegger's ontical realism, and Putnam's internal realism. Each attempt is problematic in its own way, but I argue that a promising strategy for reconciling critical metaphilosophy and realism emerges: an 'immanentizing' strategy according to which what realism requires is that, *given* the conditions of intelligibility, at least some things are (correctly) intelligible as independent of us.

The second problem is that versions of critical metaphilosophy tend to undermine themselves. The most famous example is verificationism's meaninglessness according to itself, but the problem goes all the way back to Kant – the claim that we can't cognize things in themselves makes essential reference to things in themselves. In general, the project of articulating conditions of intelligibility always seems to run the risk of violating those very conditions.

I approach this problem by working through three important attempts at *metacritique*: the post-Kantian critique of the thing in itself, Davidson's critique of conceptual relativism, and Wittgenstein's self-critique. I argue that three promising strategies for resisting the charge of self-undermining emerge: a Kantian formalist strategy, an early Wittgensteinian ostensive strategy, and a later Wittgensteinian methodological strategy. I argue that the third strategy is most promising because it is the only one that avoids a commitment to 'important nonsense.'