

JOEL VELASCO

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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Texas Tech University
Department Chair, Philosophy 2023-
Interim Department Chair, Philosophy 2021-2022
Associate Professor in Philosophy, 2019-
Assistant Professor in Philosophy, 2013-2019
California Institute of Technology
Ahmanson Postdoctoral Instructor in Philosophy, 2011-2013
Cornell University
Visiting Assistant Professor, Philosophy, 2010-2011
Stanford University
Humanities Fellow and Lecturer in Philosophy, 2008-2010

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy of Science

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Logic, Metaphysics, Epistemology

EDUCATION

Ph. D. Philosophy	2008	University of Wisconsin-Madison
M.A. Philosophy	2004	University of Wisconsin-Madison
B.A. Philosophy	2001	University of Wisconsin-Madison
B.A. Mathematics	2001	University of Wisconsin-Madison

DISSERTATION

Philosophy and the Tree of Life: The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Phylogenetic Systematics Chair: Elliott Sober (Philosophy)

PUBLICATIONS (available at <http://joelvelasco.net>)

22. Phylogenetic Inference (with Matt Haber). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phylogenetic-inference/>
21. The Use of Race in eGFR: Why Racial Justice Requires Accuracy (with Brad Snodgrass). *American Journal of Medicine* (2021) **134**(7): P827-828.
20. The Foundations of Concordance Views of Phylogeny. *Philosophy, Theory,*

and Practice in Biology (2019) 11:20.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/ptpbio.16039257.0011.020>

19. Towards a Semantics for Metanormative Constructivism (with Jeremy Schwartz). *Philosophical Studies* (2019) 176(11): 3061-3076.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-018-1163-y>
18. Universal Common Ancestry, LUCA, and the Tree of Life: Three Distinct Hypotheses about the Evolution of Life. *Biology and Philosophy* (2018) 33: 31 -- <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10539-018-9641-3>
17. Critical Notice of Elliott Sober's Ockham's Razors. *Mind* 127 (2018) 891-902
<https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzx031>
16. Updating on the Credences of Others: Disagreement, Agreement, and Synergy (with Kenny Easwaran, Christopher Hitchcock, and Luke Fenton-Glynn). *Philosopher's Imprint* 16(11) (2016) pp. 1-39.
15. Axiomatic Opportunities and Obstacles for Inferring a Species Tree from Gene Trees (with Mike Steel). *Systematic Biology* 63(5) (2014) 772-778
14. Evolutionary and Newtonian Forces (with Christopher Hitchcock). *Ergo* 1(2) (2014) pp. 39-77
13. Deep Conventionalism about Evolutionary Groups (with Matthew Barker). *Philosophy of Science* 80(5) (2013) pp. 971-982
12. Philosophy and Phylogenetics.
Philosophy Compass 8(10) (2013) pp. 990-998
11. Phylogeny as Population History.
Philosophy and Theory in Biology (2013) 5:e402
10. The Tree of Life.
In Michael Ruse (ed.) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin and Evolutionary Thought*. Cambridge University Press (2013) 340-345
9. The Future of Systematics: Tree-Thinking Without the Tree
Philosophy of Science 79 (2012) 624-636
8. Objective and Subjective Probability in Gene Expression.
Progress in Biophysics and Molecular Biology 110 (2012) 5-10
7. Species, genes, and the tree of life.
British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 61 (2010) 599-619
6. Testing for treeness: Lateral gene transfer, phylogenetic inference, and model selection (with Elliott Sober). *Biology & Philosophy* 25 (2010) 675-687

5. When monophyly is not enough: Exclusivity as the key to defining a phylogenetic species concept. *Biology & Philosophy* 24 (2009) 473–486
4. Species concepts should not conflict with evolutionary history, but often do. *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 39 (2008) 407–414
3. The prior probabilities of phylogenetic trees. *Biology & Philosophy* 23 (2008) 455–473
2. The internodal species concept: a response to “The tree, the network, and the species”. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 93 (2008) 865–869
1. Why non-uniform priors on clades are both unavoidable and unobjectionable. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 45 (2007) 748–749

BOOK REVIEWS

2. Review of *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Biology*. ed. Michael Ruse, *Metascience* 21 (2012) 359–362
1. Review of *The Species Problem* by Richard Richards. *The Philosophical Review* 120 (2011) 598–602

PRESENTATIONS (peer reviewed marked with “PR”)

61. “What is the Value of Social Genomics? Or, How to understand GWASs, PGSs, and Prediction, Causation, and Explanation in Behavior Genetics”
- Sam Houston State University, (February, 2024)
60. “Updating on the Credences of Others” (written with Kenny Easwaran, Luke Glynn, and Chris Hitchcock)
- University of Gdansk, (February, 2021 - online)
59. “Comments on Pfeifer’s Abstraction and Probabilities in Evolutionary Theory”
- Chance and Probability in Science (Boulder, CO October 2018)
- 58-57. “Universal Common Ancestry, LUCA, and the Tree of Life: Three Distinct Hypotheses about the Evolution of Life”
- University of Pennsylvania (March, 2018)
PR - Philosophy of Science Association meeting (Atlanta, CA Nov 2016)
56. “Metanormative Practical Point of View Constructivism”
PR – Central APA (Chicago, IL February 2018)
55. “The Foundations of Concordance Views of Phylogeny”
PR – Species in the Age of Discordance (Salt Lake City, UT March 2017)
54. “The Principles of Rationality: Deciding What to Believe and How to Reason”
- Texas Tech Alumni College (October, 2016)
- 53-52. “Updating on the Credences of Others” (written with Kenny Easwaran,

- Luke Glynn, and Chris Hitchcock)
 - Texas Tech Graduate Philosophy Conference, (April, 2016)
PR - Formal Epistemology Workshop, WUSTL, (May, 2015)
51. “Judgment Aggregation and Phylogenetics”
PR - International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (Montreal, July 2015)
50. “A Disunified Account of Probability in Biology”
PR - International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (Montreal, July 2015)
49. “The Hypothetical Imperative as a Rule of Inference” (with Jeremy Schwartz)
PR - St. Louis Conference on Reasons and Rationality, St. Louis (May, 2015)
48. “Conditionals and Actions” (comments on a paper by Hanti Lin)
 - Formal Epistemology Workshop, USC, (June, 2014)
- 47-44. “The Tree of Life: Metaphors, Models, and Reality”
 - Metaphors and Analogies in Biology, Bristol, UK, (June 2014)
 - Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil (October, 2013)
 - Texas Tech University (May, 2013)
 - California Institute of Technology (April, 2013)
43. “Evolutionary and Newtonian Forces” (written with Chris Hitchcock)
 - Texas Tech University (May, 2013)
PR - APA Pacific Division (San Francisco, April 2013)
- 42-41. “Deep Conventionalism about Evolutionary Groups” (with Matt Barker)
PR - Philosophy of Science Association meeting (San Diego, CA Nov 2012)
PR - Philosophy of Biology at Madison (Madison, Wisconsin, May 2012)
- 40-36. “The Future of Systematics: Tree-Thinking Without the Tree”
 - University of Michigan (September, 2012)
 - Texas Tech University (February, 2012)
 - Gustavus Adolphus College (February, 2012)
 - Ohio State University (January, 2012)
 - California Institute of Technology (January, 2012)
35. “Objective and Subjective Probability”
 Chance at the Heart of the Cell (Lyon, France, Nov 2011)
34. **PR** “Why Context Matters: An Inference Relative Understanding of Clade”
 International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (Salt Lake City, Utah, July 2011)
- 33-30. “Tree-Thinking Without the Tree”
PR - Philosophy of Science Association meeting (Montreal, Quebec, Nov 2010)
 - Reason with Diagrams Workshop (Stanford University, May 2010)
 - Bristol University (January 2010)
 - London School of Economics (December 2009)
29. “Prospects for a Universal Phylogeny”

Questioning the Tree of Life (London, UK, July 2010)

28. **PR** “The Last Universal Common Ancestor: Ontology, Semantics, and Epistemology” Philosophy of Biology at Madison (Madison, Wisconsin, May 2010)
- 27-25. “Species, Genes, and the Tree of Life”
PR - APA Pacific Division (San Francisco, April 2010)
- Stanford Humanities Fellows (May 2009)
- California Academy of Sciences (February 2009)
24. **PR** “Mathematics and Leibnizian Necessity”
APA Central Division (Chicago, February 2010)
23. **PR** “The Tree of Life: From Darwin to Today”
150 years after *Origin*: Biological, Historical, and Philosophical Perspectives, Toronto, November 2009)
22. “Inferring Phylogenetic Networks”
Perspectives on the Tree of Life (Halifax, July 2009)
21. **PR** “Parsimony and Model Selection in Phylogenetic Networks”
Society for the Philosophy of Science in Practice (Minneapolis, June 2009)
- 20-19. “The Meaning of Phylogeny”
- University of Minnesota (May 2009)
- Bay Area Biosystematists meeting (April 2009)
18. **PR** “Developing a Phylogenetic Species Concept”
APA Pacific Division (Vancouver, April 2009)
- 17-9. “The Consequences of Tree-Thinking: A Phylogenetic Perspective on the Species Problem”
- California State University – Los Angeles (January, 2012)
- Concordia University (February 2011)
- Virginia Tech (January 2011)
- George Mason University (February 2010)
- Cornell University (January 2010)
- Stanford University (February 2009)
- University of Western Ontario (February 2008)
- Southern Methodist University (February 2008)
- Florida State University (February 2008)
8. **PR** “What Species Trees Cannot Be”
Philosophy of Science Association meeting (Pittsburgh, November 2008)
7. **PR** “The Biological Species Concept and Evolutionary History”

- APA Central Division (Chicago, April 2008)
- 6-3. “The Prior Probabilities of Phylogenetic Trees”
- University of Washington, Seattle (January 2008)
 - University of California, Irvine (January 2008)
- PR** - International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (Exeter, July 2007)
- PR** - Formal Epistemology Workshop (Carnegie Mellon University, June 2007)
2. “What is the Tree of Life? Phylogenetic Classification and the Species Problem” Philosophy Department, University of Wisconsin-Madison (December 2007)
1. “Bayesian Phylogenetics and the Yule Birth Process” Evolution Seminar Series, University of Wisconsin, Madison (September 2007)

TEACHING

For full teaching details including course descriptions, syllabi, etc. please visit <http://joelvelasco.net/teaching>