

∞ SARAH CATHERINE BYERS ∞

Philosophy Department, Boston College, 359N Stokes Hall, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
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∞ Education

Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Toronto, November 2002 (Supervisor: Brad Inwood)

M.A. in Philosophy, University of Toronto, 1996

B.A. in Philosophy and English, St. Joseph's University (Honors Program), 1994

∞ Research and Teaching Interests

Ancient, Hellenistic, and Medieval Philosophy

∞ Academic Appointments

Associate Professor (with tenure), Boston College, 2014-present

Assistant Professor, Boston College, 2009-2014

Assistant Professor, Ave Maria University, 2005-2009

Assistant Professor, University of Dallas, 2003-2005

∞ Publications

Monograph

Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine: A Stoic-Platonic Synthesis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). 132,432 words; 248 + xviii printed pages.

Articles

1. "The Origin of Medieval *Synderesis* Is the Stoic Theory of Self-Affiliation (*Oikeiōsis*): Evidence from Origen, Epictetus, Hierocles, and Chrysippus" *History of Philosophy and Logical Analysis* (in press).
2. "Trinitarian Metaphysics in *Confessions* 13: Marius Victorinus and the Neoplatonic Triad 'Being, Understanding, Life'" in *The Cambridge Critical Guide to Augustine's Confessions*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming December 2025).
3. "Augustine's 'Humility': Neither 'Monkish' Nor Monosemantic" in *Humility: A History* (Oxford Philosophical Concepts Series), ed. Justin Steinberg (Oxford University Press, forthcoming October 2025).
4. "Augustine's 'Divine Illumination' as the Natural Participation of the Human Mind: Correcting Bonaventure and Gilson via Plotinus and Marius Victorinus" in *Participation in the Divine: A Philosophical History, From Antiquity to the Modern Era*, ed. Douglas Hedley (Cambridge University Press, 2024), 128-161.

5. "'Consubstantiality' As a Philosophical-Theological Problem: Victorinus' Hylomorphic Model of God and His 'Correction' by Augustine," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 75.1 (2022).
6. "Love, Will, and the Intellectual Ascents" in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, ed. T. Toom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 154-174.
7. "Augustinian Puzzles About Body, Soul, Flesh, and Death" in *Embodiment: A History* (Oxford Philosophical Concepts Series), ed. J.E.H. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 87-108.
8. "Early Christian Ethics" in *The Cambridge History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 112-124.
9. "Augustine's Debt to Stoicism in the *Confessions*" in *The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition* (London: Routledge Press, 2016), 56-69.
10. "The Psychology of Compassion: Stoicism in *City of God* 9.5" in *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide*, ed. James Wetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2012), 130-148.
11. "Augustine and the Philosophers" in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 175-187.
12. "Augustine on the 'Divided' Self: Platonist or Stoic?" *Augustinian Studies* 38.1 (2007), 105-118.
13. "Life as 'Self-Motion': Descartes and the Aristotelians on the Soul as the Life of the Body," *Review of Metaphysics* 59.4 (June 2006), 723-755.
14. "The Meaning of *Voluntas* in Augustine," *Augustinian Studies* 37.2 (2006), 171-189.
15. "Augustine and the Cognitive Cause of Stoic 'Preliminary Passions' (*Propatheiai*)," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41.4 (October 2003), 433-448.

Peer-Refereed Responses to Conference Presentations

16. "Platonism in Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*: Response to Mark Shiffman," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy* 36, ed. G. Gurtler and W. Wians (Boston: Brill, 2021).
17. "The Stoics on Identity, Discernibility, and Identification: Commentary on T. Nawar," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy* 32, ed. G. Gurtler and W. Wians (Boston: Brill, 2017), 160-165.

Podcast and Video Interviews

- "Sarah Byers on Augustine's Ethics," audio interview with Peter Adamson. *History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps*, Episode 114. Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and King's College London. Posted February 3, 2013. (<http://historyofphilosophy.net/augustine-byers>)

Books in Progress

- *Augustine and Marius Victorinus: Between Ancient and Medieval Philosophy and Theology*
- *Natural Law Theory: Aquinas, Albert the Great, and Greco-Roman Stoicism*

☞ Fellowships and Awards

- Princeton University Faculty Fellowship, 2025-2026 academic year
- Eighty Percent Full-Year Sabbatical (Competitive), Boston College, 2017-2018
- Summer Fellowship, University of Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture, 2017

- Summer Fellowship, University of Notre Dame McGrath Institute for Church Life, 2017
- Half-Year Fellowship (“Imbesi” Fellowship), Villanova University, Spring 2012
- National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar Participant, Tunisia, July-August 2010
- Full-Year Fellowship (“Myser” Fellowship), University of Notre Dame, 2009-2010
- Full-Year Postdoctoral Fellowship, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 2006-2007
- Summer Fellowship, University of Notre Dame Jacques Maritain Center, 2006
- Research and travel grants from the Dean’s Office, Ave Maria University, 2005-2006, 2006-2007
- Competitive travel grants for conference presentations from the Medieval Academy of America (2002) and the University of Dallas (2003)
- Cheeseborough Research Grant, University of Toronto, 2000
- International Student Awards from University of Toronto, 1996-2000

☞ Referee for Publications:

- Cambridge University Press
- Routledge Press
- University of Chicago Press
- Georgetown University Press
- Catholic University of America Press
- *Journal of the History of Philosophy*
- *Mind*
- *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*
- *Classical Studies*
- *Modern Theology*
- *Faith and Philosophy*
- *Journal of Early Christian Studies*
- *International Journal of Systematic Theology*
- *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*
- *Res Philosophica*
- *History of Philosophy Quarterly*
- *American Political Science Review*
- *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*
- *Augustinian Studies*
- *Phasis: Greek and Roman Studies*
- *Religions*

☞ Book Reviews

1. In *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58.1 (January 2020): *Augustine and Wittgenstein* edd. J. Doody et al. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), 186-187.
2. For *The Classical Review* 60.1 (2010): *Augustine’s Way into the Will. The Theological and Philosophical Significance of De Libero Arbitrio* by Simon Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

3. For *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2006.12.06 (December 2006, online publication): *Augustine* by Gareth Matthews (Oxford, Blackwell: 2005).
4. For *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 11.3 (Winter 2005): *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*, translation and commentary by Margaret Graver (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2002).
5. For *The Medieval Review* 03.10.02 (October 2003, online publication): *Augustine: On the Trinity*, ed. Gareth Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2002).
6. For *International Philosophical Quarterly* 43.3 (September 2003): *Sextus Empiricus and Pyrrhonian Scepticism* by Alan Bailey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002).
7. For *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2003.06.22 (June 2003, online publication): *Seneca: The Life of a Stoic* by Paul Veyne (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Presentations: Proposals Were Subjected to Peer Review

1. Seneca and Stoicism Workshop, University of London, April 2025
“Seneca and Stoic ‘Freedom from Social Vanity’”
2. Cornell Summer Colloquium in Medieval Philosophy, May 2024
“Aquinas’ *Synderesis* as Stoic Rational Self-Affiliation (*Oikeiōsis*, *Suntērēsis*): Correcting a Common Misconception”
3. Oxford University, Corpus Christi College, Conference “Augustine on Relations,” March 2024
“The Ghost of Marius Victorinus in *Confessions* 13: Trinitarian Relations”
4. 15th Annual Toronto Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, March 2024
“Trinitarian Metaphysics in the *Confessions*: Marius Victorinus and the Neoplatonic Triad ‘Being, Life, Mind’”
5. University of Paris Conference “New Perspectives on the Social in Medieval Philosophy,” February 2024
“Aquinas’ *Synderesis* as Stoic Rational *Oikeiōsis*: A Natural Community of Knowledge”
6. Yale University Berkeley Divinity School, Conference on “The Apostolic Ministry,” October 2023
“Augustine’s Engagement with Academic Skepticism in his Argument for the ‘Authority’ of the Apostolic Succession”
7. American Catholic Philosophical Association, November 2022
“Cracking the Code: The Patristic Roots of Aquinas’ *Synderesis*”
8. Medieval Philosophy and Theology Conference, Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture, May 2022
“Aristotle and Marius Victorinus in Augustine’s *De Trinitate*”
9. Cornell Summer Colloquium in Medieval Philosophy, May 2022
“Augustine’s So-Called ‘Divine Illumination Theory of Knowledge’”
10. Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy Conference at Notre Dame, October 2021
“Animal Instinct and Natural Law in Aquinas”
11. University of Leuven Conference “Women on Medieval Philosophy,” July 2021
“Aquinas, Albert the Great, and Greco-Roman Ethics: The Object of the Moral Act”
12. Modern Language Association, Northeastern Division, March 2019
“Aquinas’ Use of Cicero in his Theory of Natural Law and Natural Inclinations”
13. American Philosophical Association Central Division, Feb. 2017
“The Use of Aristotle in 4th–5th Century Accounts of Intellect and Will (Augustine and Victorinus)”

14. Conference on Metaphysics in the Tradition of Aristotle, Providence College, Sept. 2016
“Aristotelian Metaphysics in Marius Victorinus and Augustine”
15. Conference on the Study of Ancient Christianity, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, May 2016
“The Development of Early Christian Ethical Theory Regarding Killing the Innocent, as Seen in Commentaries on Genesis 22:2”
16. American Political Science Association, Sept. 2015
“Law as Ethical Norm in the Cosmic City: Augustine, Cicero, and Others”
17. University of Leuven Conference on Language and Culture in Early Christianity, Sept. 2015
“In What Sense is God ‘Being’? Victorinus and Augustine”
18. Cornell University Colloquium on Medieval Philosophy, May 2013
“Is God ‘Being’? Victorinus and Plotinus in Augustine”
19. Northeastern Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Boston, November 2012
“Augustine, Seneca and Nussbaum on the Distinction Between Mercy and Compassion in Political Life”
20. International Patristics Conference, Oxford University, UK, August 2011
“Can Apophaticism Save Plotinus from Contradiction? An Augustinian Critique from *Gn. Litt.* 4”
21. Cornell University Colloquium on Medieval Philosophy, May 2011
“The Psychology of Compassion: A Reading of *City of God* 9.5”
22. Cornell University Colloquium on Medieval Philosophy, June 2010
“Some Augustinian Arguments about God, Daemones, and Bodies”
23. North American Patristics Society Conference, May 2010
“Cooperation with Grace as Stoic ‘Yielding’ to ‘Hormetic Impressions’ in Augustine”
24. International Patristics Conference, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Rome, May 2010
“References to Stoic Mental Language in Some Sermons of Augustine”
25. University of Notre Dame Conference on “Freedom and the Common Good,” Nov. 2009
“Emotions, Virtue and the Common Good in Augustine”
26. Cornell University Colloquium on Medieval Philosophy, May 2007
“Solving the Riddle of *Confessions* 8.27”
27. American Philological Association Annual Conference, January 2007
“Preliminary Joy in *De Civitate Dei* 16”
28. University of Notre Dame Conference, “Modernity: Yearning for the Infinite,” Dec. 2006
“The Reception of Aristotle’s Definition of Life in the Early Modern Period”
29. Conference on “Aquinas the Augustinian,” Ave Maria University, Feb. 2005
“Divine Ideas in Augustine, Plotinus, and Aquinas”
30. International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2004
“*Voluntas* as a Translation for Stoic *Hormē* in Some Texts of Augustine”
31. International Conference on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Fordham University, Nov. 2003
“Augustine’s Theory of Action”
32. International Patristics, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference, Villanova University, Sept. 2003
“Descartes and 16th-17th c. Aristotelianism on the Soul as the Life of the Body”
33. International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, UK, July 2003
“Preliminary Passions in Augustine’s Sermons”

34. International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2003
“Augustine and the Cognitive Cause of Stoic ‘Preliminary Passions’ (*Propatheiai*)”

☞ Presentations: Invited (Select)

35. Cornell University Philosophy Graduate Program Proseminar, Oct. 2024
“Origen and Aquinas on *Synderesis*: Stoic Rational Self-Affiliation”
36. Columbia University Contemporary Civilization Core Curriculum “Expert Lecture,” September 2022
“Augustine’s *City of God*”
37. Assumption College Annual Augustine Lecture, November 2019
“Mercy and Justice in Political Life: Augustine, Seneca, and Nussbaum”
38. Columbia University Contemporary Civilization Core Curriculum “Expert Lecture,” September 2019
“Augustine’s *City of God*”
39. University of Notre Dame Philosophy Department, Colloquium on the Emotions, March 2019
“Augustine’s Cognitive Theory of Affectivity”
40. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Albert the Great Lecture, Nov. 2018
“How is Genesis Compatible with Science? Augustine’s Account”
41. University of Helsinki, Conference on Representation and Reality, June 2017
“Victorinus and Augustine on the Identity of Content Known in First and Second Actuality of Knowledge”
42. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Nov. 2016
Response to J. Clair, *Discerning the Good in the Letters and Sermons of Augustine* (OUP, 2016)
43. American Catholic Philosophical Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, Oct. 2016
“I Answer That: Response to S. O’Neill” (presented by proxy, Fran O’Rourke)
44. Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, March 2016
“The Stoics on Identity, Discernibility, and Identification: Commentary on T. Nawar”
45. Johns Hopkins University, Mind Eternity & Immortality Workshop, April 2015
“Victorinus and Augustine on the Mind of God: Different senses of “being” in 4th-century models of divine “consubstantiality.”
46. Oxford Philosophical Concepts Workshop on Embodiment, Paris, December 12-13, 2014
“Augustinian and Aristotelian Puzzles About Embodiment: Flesh, Body, Life, and Death”
47. Harvard History of Philosophy Workshop, February 2013
“Augustine’s Critical Engagement with Victorinus’ Use of an Aristotelian Analysis of ‘Substance’”
48. University of Notre Dame Conference on “Athens and Jerusalem,” April 2013
“Perception, Motivation, Inspiration: Augustine’s Use of Stoic Epistemology to Explain How Grace Influences Motivation”
49. Boston Patristics Group, April 2013
“The Psychology of Compassion: Stoicism in *City of God* 9.5”
50. American Philosophical Society Central Division, Annual Conference, February 2013
Respondent to a paper on “Augustine’s *Confessions* and Platonic Recollection”
51. Villanova University Open Lecture, April 2012
“The Psychology of Compassion: Augustine and Seneca on Mercy vs. Compassion”

52. University of Toronto Conference on Augustine's *Confessions*, March 2007
"Confessiones 8.11.26-7: Stoic Epistemology in Augustine's Theory of Motivation"
53. International Conference on Augustine, "Reconsiderations II," Villanova University, Sept. 2006
"Augustine on the Divided Self"