

BRANDON POLITE

Curriculum Vitae

Knox College
Philosophy Department
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EXPERTISE

- AOS: Aesthetics, Philosophy of Music, Value Theory
- AOC: Ancient Greek Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Logic

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- R. Lance Factor Endowed Chair in Philosophy, Knox College, Fall 2025–
- Professor of Philosophy, Knox College, Spring 2024–
- Associate Professor of Philosophy, Knox College, Spring 2017–Spring 2024
- Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Knox College, Fall 2014–Spring 2017
- Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Knox College, Winter 2011–Spring 2014
- Visiting Instructor of Philosophy, Knox College, Winter 2008–Fall 2010

EDUCATION

- PhD. Philosophy, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, December 2010
- MA. Philosophy, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, August 2005
- BA. Philosophy, cum laude with honors, Knox College, June 2003

PUBLICATIONS

EDITED VOLUMES

1. *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics*, eds. Aaron Meskin, Brandon Polite, and Elizabeth Scarbrough. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell (under contract).
2. *Taylor Swift and the Philosophy of Re-recording: The Art of Taylor's Versions*, ed. Brandon Polite. London: Bloomsbury (2025).

Book Chapters

1. "Introduction: The Story of Taylor's Versions," in *Taylor Swift and the Philosophy of Re-recording*.
2. "Re-recording as Reclamation: Metaphysics, Metaphor, and Taylor's Versions," in *Taylor Swift and the Philosophy of Re-recording*.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. P.D. Magnus, Emmie Malone, and Brandon Polite, "Music Genres as Historical Individuals," *British Journal of Aesthetics* (forthcoming).
2. Brandon Polite and Elizabeth Scarbrough, "Patina of Sound: Valuing Vinyl Records as Relics of Aged Interaction," *ESPEs. The Slovak Journal of Aesthetics* 14(1) (2025): 104–122. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15835351>
3. Brandon Polite and Aaron Meskin, "Why Record Shops Matter Aesthetically: A Case Study in Aesthetic Institutions," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 83(2) (2025): 165–176. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaac/kpaf014>
4. Brandon Polite, "Uncovering the Flaws in *A Philosophy of Cover Songs*," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 23(1) (2025). link: <https://contempaesthetics.org/2025/02/09/uncovering-the-flaws-in-a-philosophy-of-cover-songs/>
5. Brandon Polite, "Shared Musical Experiences," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 59(4) (2019): 429–447. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayz024>
6. Brandon Polite, "Prelude to a Theory of Musical Representation," *Revista Musica* 17(1): 89–108. (2017). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/rm.v17i1.144602>
7. Brandon Polite, "The Varieties of Musical Experience," *Pragmatism Today* 5(2) (2014): 93–100. link: <https://www.pragmatismtoday.eu/winter2014/15%20Polite.pdf>
8. Brandon Polite, "Tortured Calculations: Body Economics in Shakespeare's Cultures of Honor," *Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference*, 4(1) (2011): 68–79. link: <http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/spovsc/vol4/iss2011/6>

Contributions to Edited Collections

1. "Taylor Swift, *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*," in *Bloomsbury Contemporary Aesthetics Library*, ed. Darren Hudson Hick (Bloomsbury Philosophy Library, 2023). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350895737.0014>

BOOK REVIEWS

1. "Review of Magnus, P.D., *A Philosophy of Cover Songs*," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 81(1) (2023): 109–112. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaac/kpac072>
2. "Review of Nanay, Bence, *Aesthetics: A Very Short Introduction*," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 79(3) (2021): 402–405. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaac/kpab029>
3. "Review of Trivedi, Saam, *Imagination, Music, and the Emotions: A Philosophical Study*," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 78(1) (2020): 117–120. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jaac.12708>

PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

1. Aaron Meskin and Brandon Polite, "Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics," *Guides to Public Philosophy*, edited by Ian Olasov and Jeanne Proust, Public Philosophy Network, online

(October 2025). | link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RUBAkpZaBFPm82ydmJ9WlQphY58ecBC/view>

2. Brandon Polite, “Revis(it)ing the Past (Taylor’s Version),” Roundtable: *Philosophers on Taylor Swift*, edited by Ryan Davis, *Daily Nous*, online (April 7, 2023). | link: <https://dailynous.com/2023/04/07/philosophers-on-taylor-swift/>
3. Brandon Polite, “Philosophers Discussing Art on YouTube,” *American Society for Aesthetics Newsletter* 43(1) (2023): 1–3. | link: <https://cdn.ymaws.com/aesthetics-online.org/resource/resmgr/newsletters/43.1.pdf>
4. Brandon Polite and Elizabeth Scarbrough, “Teaching Global Aesthetics,” *American Society for Aesthetics Newsletter* 42(2) (2022): 1–3. | link: <https://cdn.ymaws.com/aesthetics-online.org/resource/resmgr/newsletters/42.2.pdf>
5. Brandon Polite, “Game Spectation as Shared Experience,” Roundtable: *Let’s Play and Twitch: Where Voyeurism Meets Gaming*, edited by C. Thi Nguyen and Brandon Polite, *Aesthetics for Birds*, online August 11, 2022. | <https://aestheticsforbirds.com/2022/08/11/roundtable-voyeur-gaming/>
6. Brandon Polite and Matt Strohl, “Five Strategies for Arguing About Art on the Internet,” edited by Alex King, *Aesthetics for Birds*, online March 23, 2021. | link: <https://aestheticsforbirds.com/2021/03/23/arguing-about-art-on-the-internet-part-2-five-strategies/>
7. Brandon Polite and Matt Strohl, “Arguing About Art on the Internet, Part 1: Why We Do It, and Why It Often Goes Badly,” edited by Alex King, *Aesthetics for Birds*, online September 9, 2020. | link: <https://aestheticsforbirds.com/2020/09/09/arguing-about-art-on-the-internet-part-1/>

YOUTUBE SERIES

POLITE CONVERSATIONS: PHILOSOPHERS DISCUSS THE ARTS

Description: This series, which I host, brings leading philosophers of art into thoughtful, engaging dialogue on pressing questions in aesthetics—such as how we should respond to art made by immoral creators or what makes “bad” art worth appreciating—with clarity, rigor, and accessibility. Designed for scholars, students, and anyone interested in art or our aesthetic lives, the series transforms complex ideas into lively, illuminating conversations.

Series link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/PhilosophersDiscussingArt>

PROMOTION:

1. “Polite Conversations: Philosophers Discuss the Arts,” *Aesthetics for Birds*, online (April 28, 2021). (Updated January 27, 2022.) | [link](#)
2. “‘Old Town Road’: Country or Not?” *Aesthetics for Birds*, online (June 29, 2020). | [link](#)

OTHER MEDIA

1. Interviewed for “The Ubiquitous Power of Taylor Swift,” *Deseret News*. July 2023. | link: <https://www.deseret.com/2023/7/22/23579559/taylor-swift-eras-tour-taking-over-america-summer/>
2. *Cows in the Field* (podcast), Ep. 92. *Gremlins* (w/ Brandon Polite). June 2023. | link: <https://cowspod.com/2023/06/24/gremlins-1984/>
3. Bloomsbury Publishing, “Conversations in Contemporary Aesthetics: Philosophers in a Live Webinar Discussion” (panelist). May 2023 | link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8KihPv2IoY>

RECENT PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

1. “Lessons from Taylor Swift’s Re-recordings: An Ontology of Versions”:
 - a. Bloomsbury Lecture Series. Online, April 2025. | video: https://youtu.be/Ke_uS8C1nFY?si=s8wniB372uyuUGOb
 - b. Florida International University. March. 2025.
2. “Taylor Swift and the Philosophy of Re-Recording”:
 - a. Marshall T. Steel Center for the Study of Religion and Philosophy, Hendrix College. Online, October 2023.
 - b. ASA Feminist Caucus Committee Virtual Summerfest. Online, July 2023.
 - c. College of Charleston. March 2023.
 - d. University of Georgia. March 2023.
 - e. Furman University. March 2023.
 - f. Purdue Normativity and Cognitions Lab. Purdue University, December 2022.
3. “The Ethics of Re-Recordings.” American Society for Aesthetics Virtual Summer Aesthetics Festival. Co-sponsored by the University at Albany. Online, June 2022.
4. “The Fine Art of Sonic Duplication.” The Aesthetics Research Seminar at Uppsala University. Online, September 2021.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

1. “Are Taylor’s Versions New Works of Art?” American Society for Aesthetics, Annual Meeting. Arlington, VA, November 2023.
2. “Why Record Shops Matter Aesthetically” (with Aaron Meskin). ASA Southern Aesthetics Workshop, Annual Meeting. Furman University, October 2023.
3. “Stand-up Comedy and the Aesthetics of Revealing and Concealing” (with Mary-Beth Willard). American Society for Aesthetics Rocky Mountain Division, Annual Meeting. Santa Fe, July 2023.
4. “Social Gaming and the Shared Experience of Agency” (panel on Voyeur Gaming). American Society for Aesthetics, Annual Meeting. Montreal, November 2021.

5. “Infomercials and the Junk Aesthetics of Consumerism” (with John Dyck). American Society for Aesthetics Rocky Mountain Division, Annual Meeting. Santa Fe, July 2021.
6. “Vinyl, Album Covers, and the Continuum of Touch.” American Society for Aesthetics Eastern Division, Annual Meeting. Online, April 2021.
7. “Epistemic Humility and the Limits of Aesthetic Autonomy.” American Society for Aesthetics 78th Annual Meeting. Online, November 2020.

PROFESSIONAL COMMENTARY

1. Comments on “The Joke’s on Us: A Dilemma for the Philosophy of Humor,” by Elizabeth Cantalamessa, ASA Southern Aesthetics Workshop, Annual Meeting. University of Georgia, September 2025.
2. Comments on “Beyond Story Songs: Country Music and Literary Lyrics,” by Kari Hanson-Park, ASA Southern Aesthetics Workshop, Annual Meeting. Auburn University, November 2024.
3. Comments on “The Aesthetic Costs of Being Medication” by Angela Sun, American Society for Aesthetics, Annual Meeting. Chicago, October 2024.
4. Comments on *A Philosophy of Cover Songs* by P.D. Magnus, Author Meets Critics Session at American Society for Aesthetics Rocky Mountain Division, Annual Meeting. Santa Fe, July 2024.
5. Comments on “Hip as Aesthetic Property” by Saul Fisher at American Society for Aesthetics, Annual Meeting. Portland, OR, November 2022.
6. Comments on papers by Christopher Bartel, James Harold, and Nicholas Whittaker for the ASA (“When Bad People Make Good Art”) Session at the APA Pacific Division, Annual Meeting. Vancouver, April 2022.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Trustee. American Society for Aesthetics. Feb. 2023–Jan. 2026.
- Program Committee Member. ASA Southern Aesthetics Workshop. Nov. 2024–Sep. 2025.

RECOGNITION

- Knox College Faculty Exceptional Achievement Award, 2024–2025.
- Knox College Faculty Exceptional Achievement Award, 2021–2022.

RECENT SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES AT KNOX COLLEGE

- Member. Faculty Personnel Committee. Fall 2025–
- Member. Knox College Venture Boldy Campaign Cabinet. Fall 2024–
- Chair. Department of Philosophy. Fall 2018–
- Member. Honorary Degree Subcommittee, Fall 2022–Spring 2025.
- Member. Cultural Events Committee, Fall 2020–Spring 21.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- American Society for Aesthetics