

Patricia Thornton

Rice University | Department of Philosophy
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Last updated: July 2026

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Value Theory, Ethics, Metaethics, Moral Psychology

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Action Theory, Modern Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy

EDUCATION

In progress	Ph.D. in Philosophy Rice University, Houston, TX
2018	M.A. in Philosophy University of Houston, Houston, TX
2013	B.A. in Philosophy, Politics Drake University, Des Moines, IA

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT AND POSITIONS

2020–2023	Graduate Director, Houston High School Ethics Bowl Rice University, Houston, TX
2021	Writing Coach, Center for Academic and Professional Writing Rice University, Houston, TX
2020–2021	Research Assistant, Philosophy Rice University, Houston, TX
2019	Administrative Assistant, LATAM Bridges Project University of Houston, Houston, TX

TEACHING

As Instructor

Summer 2020	Ethics and Society Rice University
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– Summer 2021	High school program for juniors and seniors
Spring 2019	Modern Philosophy University of Houston Downtown Undergraduate philosophy majors
Fall 2018 – Spring 2019	Introduction to Philosophy University of Houston Downtown Undergraduate course
Fall 2018 – Spring 2019	Introduction to Philosophy Lone Star CyFair Undergraduate course

As Teaching Assistant

Summer 2018	Introduction to Ethics (Matthew Babb) University of Houston
Spring 2018	Philosophy of Art (Christy Mag Uidhir) University of Houston
Fall 2017	Philosophy of Art (Christy Mag Uidhir) University of Houston
Summer 2018	Introduction to Ethics (Matthew Babb) University of Houston
Spring 2017	Introduction to Ethics (Tamlar Sommers) University of Houston
Fall 2016	Introduction to Ethics (Justin Coates) University of Houston

CONFERENCES

2024:	Commentary on Russ McIntosh, The Argument from Sore Winners, <i>Rice Animal Ethics Graduate Conference</i> , April 20
2023:	Commentary on Weiwei Mo, “Selfhood and Meaning in Life” <i>Rice-UH Graduate Conference</i> , November 17
2022:	Commentary on Quentin LeBlanc, “Limiting Punishment” <i>Rice-UH Graduate Conference</i> , October 1
2021–2022:	“Love and Simulations,” for Rice University’s <i>Civic Humanist Talks</i> , Houston, TX, various high schools
2020:	“The Myth of Irreplaceability,” <i>New Mexico Texas Philosophical Society Conference</i> , April 3 [Cancelled due to pandemic]

SERVICE

2024	Judge, <i>Houston High School Ethics Bowl</i> , Rice University, February 10
2021	Graduate Representative, <i>Humanities Student Association</i> , Rice University, June 2021 – May 2022
2020	Judge, <i>Houston High School Ethics Bowl</i> , Rice University, February 1
2018	Graduate Student Panel, <i>Mellon Research Scholars Seminar</i> , University of Houston Honors College, May 25

2017 Graduate Representative, *Provost Roundtable*, University of Houston, April 14

AWARDS AND HONORS

2026 Mellon Seminar Fellowship, Department of Humanities, Rice University, January 2026 – December 2026

2021 Civic Humanist Fellow, Humanities Research Center, Rice University, August 2021 – May 2022

2013 Departmental Honors, Philosophy, Drake University

2012 Allen Scult Emeritus Award for Excellence in Philosophy, Drake University

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

2024–2026 Quality Assurance Coordinator, Print Communications
Newrez LLC, Houston, TX

2015–2016 Quality Assurance Analyst 2, Asset Management and Preservation
Wells Fargo Consumer Lending Group, Des Moines, IA

2014–2015 Loan Servicing Specialist 4, FHA Conveyance Claims
Wells Fargo Consumer Lending Group, Des Moines, IA

2014 Loan Servicing Specialist 3, FHLMC Claims
Wells Fargo Consumer Lending Group, Des Moines, IA

2013–2014 Loan Servicing Specialist 3, 2, FHLMC Claims
Randstad, West Des Moines, IA