Dear Prospective MA Students,

We're excited you're considering Toronto Metropolitan University! TMU is a large department that represents many philosophical areas and traditions. We would love for you to be a part of our community.

A little about me: I completed my Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame in 2019, and, after a 1-year post doc in Australia, I joined the philosophy department at TMU in Fall 2020.

My research is mostly in epistemology and philosophy of religion. In epistemology, I've worked on the relationship between belief and credence. Belief is familiar: taking something to be the case or regarding it as true. There are three belief-like attitudes we can take toward a proposition: I believe 1+1=2, withhold belief that there is an even number of stars, and disbelieve that the sky is green.

But plausibly, this can't be the whole picture. Notice that I believe both that 1+1=2 and that it will be cold outside tomorrow, but I'm more confident in the former than the latter. For this reason, epistemologists appeal to a second attitude, similar to a degree of confidence—*credence*. Credences are measured on a scale between 1 and 0, where 1 means you're sure something is true (e.g. 1+1=2) and 0 means you're sure it is false (e.g. 1+1=3). So, while my credence that 1+1=2 is 1, my credence that it will be cold tomorrow is around 0.95.

But this raises a bunch of new questions. Do we have both beliefs and credences? Does one reduce to the other? If not, why would we have both attitudes? Do they just "float free"? Is it possible to believe something but have a low credence in it? And what makes a belief or a credence rational? Could one ever have a rational belief and a low credence? Much of my work defends the idea that belief and credence are largely independent, and tries to explain how and why this might be the case.

I've also written on a view called *epistemic permissivism*. This is the view that sometimes, a single body of evidence rationally permits multiple opinions on some matter. For example, suppose two people share evidence but one's a theist and one's an atheist. If permissivism is true, this doesn't automatically mean one of them is irrational. I've defended permissivism, and I'm interested in implications it has for other debates, like disagreement.

My research in philosophy of religion centers around two main topics: faith and Pascal's wager. I explore whether and how faith could be rational, from both an epistemic and a practical perspective, especially if it "goes beyond the evidence." Pascal's wager is an argument that we should believe in God, because we have a potentially infinite gain if we believe and God exists, and a potentially infinite loss if we don't believe and God exists. There are a bunch of objections to Pascal's wager, and my research explores whether a version of the wager can escape those objections.

This letter includes only a few of my research interests—I would love to work with MA students in any area of epistemology or philosophy of religion. I'm also interested in decision theory, philosophy of mind, and social philosophy.

Feel free to email me (lizjackson111@ryerson.ca) if you have any questions: e.g. about the department, my research, my teaching, or anything else. I hope you decide to join us at TMU next year!

All the best,

Liz Jackson
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