



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



HPSC ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Ryan O'Loughlin, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Queens College (City University of
New York)

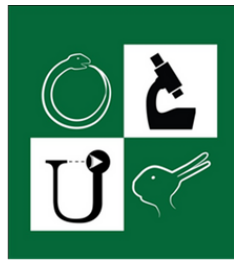




Curious about where life after HPSC can take you?

Check out the reflections of HPSC alum Ryan O'Loughlin, now an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Queens College, as he shares some of his experiences in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine. Learn how his time in HPSC influenced his professional journey and contributed to his success in the fields of philosophy and environmental science. Be sure to catch his valuable advice for aspiring professionals in the field!





What classes do you remember most fondly?

Jordi's philosophy of time class and Lisa's values in science class both come to mind.

In Jordi's class we covered a huge range of topics—probably my favorite reading list from my time at IU—and it was also the only class I was taking when we transitioned to online-only during the early days of the pandemic. The latter is not exactly a fond memory, but it was a surreal experience that left an impression. The whole world was changing and there we were, reading and discussing predictivism, time-asymmetry of cognition, the history of philosophy of history, to name just a few.

Lisa's class was special for a couple reasons. First, it was absurdly large for a seminar—more than 20 students, a mixture of undergrad and grad—and yet we had some of the best discussions in that class. I was impressed by the undergrads who were so enthusiastic to learn that (and how) values influenced science. Second, I remember my (now-wife) Dan Li and I building a game to reconstruct something called the “cross-impacts balance” method for achieving objectivity, as discussed in one of the papers we read. We used a matrix and tested it using our own “expert opinions” about Bojack Horseman and turned in the results instead of a reflection paper. Lisa loved it!





What are you doing now? What are your future plans?

I am a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Queens College (City University of New York). I teach both general philosophy & climate change courses to philosophy and environmental science undergrads. I'm continuing my research projects on climate modeling and so I'm fortunate to live in NYC which is home to NASA's climate modeling institution. I have two big grant proposals pending (fingers crossed!) and I've also applied for a 1-yr Science and Technology Policy Fellowship through AAAS. I want to make an impact outside of academia, and I am working towards that.





Looking back, what aspects of your HPSC education best prepared you for your professional career?

I find it difficult to write this without repeating much of Chris ChoGlueck's answer to this. Here's one thing: I think I have a better general understanding of scientific reasoning compared to philosophers trained in non-HPS departments and compared to scientists themselves (unless those scientists have HPS training!).





What's one piece of advice you have for incoming students interested in HPSC.

I have two bits of advice for philosophy-leaning students who plan to someday enter the academic job market. First, follow the advice from the IU HPSC faculty to study science firsthand (if you don't already do this) but recognize that this is not typical for philosophers.

Philosophers working in traditional philosophy departments will likely have trouble understanding why you have science training and how your writing, teaching, thinking, etc. are philosophical. Find a way to mitigate this misunderstanding. Second, have a solid backup plan. Having a backup is important not only because the market is tough and lottery-like, and the odds are totally against you. It's also important because it can reduce the feelings of desperation that many academic job seekers appear to have (seriously, just visit one of the many philosophy blogs/forums/wikis and see what kinds of questions are asked). The education you get from IU HPSC will make you competitive for all sorts of jobs, including many that are outside of academia. Just keep your eyes open.



HPSC ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

HPSC extends a heartfelt thank you to Assistant Professor O'Loughlin for participating in the January edition of our Alumni Spotlight. Good luck with your grant proposals and cheers to your continued career success!



Visit our HPSC Website for more information and updates from our department

Contact Information

Website: hpsc.indiana.edu

Email: HPSCdept@iu.edu

Instagram: [hpsc_iu](https://www.instagram.com/hpsc_iu)

Ryan O'Loughlin Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of
Philosophy
Queens College (City
University of New York)

Learn more about Assistant
Professor O'Loughlin here

:

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=FVgAseQAAAAJ&hl=en>

