

DAVID VANDER LAAN

Curriculum Vitae

updated Jan. 2026

Contact Information

Department of Philosophy
Westmont College
955 La Paz Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

(805) 565-7041
vanderla@westmont.edu

Professional Appointments

Westmont College, Professor	2012 to present
Westmont College, Associate Professor	2006-2012
Westmont College, Assistant Professor	2000-2006
University of Notre Dame, Instructor	2000

Education

University of Notre Dame
Ph.D. in Philosophy, Jan. 2000

Calvin University
B.A. in Philosophy and Mathematics, May 1993

Areas of Specialization

Metaphysics
Logic
Philosophy of Religion

Areas of Competence

Epistemology
Ancient Philosophy
Medieval Philosophy
Philosophy of Mind

Dissertation

Title:	<i>Impossible Worlds</i>
Director:	Alvin Plantinga

Research Award

American Philosophical Association's 2022 Alvin Plantinga Prize,
for the paper "Satisfaction in the End without End"

Articles and Book Chapters

- "Satisfaction in the End without End," in Lara Buchak and Dean Zimmerman, eds., *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion: Volume 11*, Oxford, 2025.
- "What Efficacious Divine Action Need Not Be (or How to Split an Atomic Action)," *Philosophia Christi* 25:2 (2023), 231-237.
- Update of "Creation and Conservation," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/creation-conservation/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/creation-conservation/).
- "The Timing of Divine Conservation: Pushes, Nudges, and Merry-Go-Rounds" in Greg Ganssle, ed., *Philosophical Essays on Divine Causation*, Routledge, 2022.
- "The Paradox of the End without End," *Faith & Philosophy* 35:2 (April 2018), 157-172.
- "Adverse Consequences," in Robert Arp, Steve Barbone, and Mike Bruce, eds., *Bad Arguments: 100 of the Most Important Fallacies in Western Philosophy*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2018.
- "Creation and Conservation," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/creation-conservation/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/creation-conservation/).
- "The Concord of Molinism with Modal Voluntarism," *Analysis Reviews* 2015 75 (2): 259-270.
- "Singular Propositions and Serious Actualism: A Reply to Merricks," in Kelly James Clark and Michael Rea, eds., *Reason, Metaphysics, and Mind: New Essays on the Philosophy of Alvin Plantinga*, Oxford University Press, 2012.
- "Lewis's Argument for Possible Worlds," in Steven Barbone and Michael Bruce, eds., *Just the Arguments: 100 of the Most Important Arguments in Western Philosophy*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- "A Relevance Constraint on Composition," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88:1 (March 2010), 135-145.
- "The Sanctification Argument for Purgatory," *Faith & Philosophy* 24:3 (July 2007), 331-339.
- "Persistence and Divine Conservation," *Religious Studies* 42 (2006), 159-176.
- "Counterpossibles and Similarity," in Frank Jackson and Graham Priest, eds., *Lewisian Themes: the Philosophy of David K. Lewis*, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- "A Regress Argument for Restrictivism," *Philosophical Studies* 103:2 (March (II) 2001), 201-215.
- "The Ontology of Impossible Worlds," *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 38:4 (Fall 1997), 597-620.

Edited Volume

Matthew Davidson, Thomas Crisp, David Vander Laan, eds., *Knowledge and Reality: Essays in Honor of Alvin Plantinga*, Kluwer Academic Press, 2006.

Book Reviews

Review of *Who's Afraid of Relativism? Community, Contingency, and Creaturehood* by James K. A. Smith, *Christian Scholar's Review*, XLV:4 (Summer 2016).

Review of *Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Alternative to the Soul* by Kevin Corcoran, *Faith & Philosophy*, 25:3 (July 2008).

Invited Presentations

"The End Without End," California Philosophy of Religion Workshop, 9 May 2024

"What Efficacious Divine Action Need Not Be," American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, 7 April 2023

"Ideological Parsimony and Reduction: A Reply to Rubio," 40th Anniversary Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 14 Sept. 2018

"Comments on Pittard's 'Evil and God's Toxin Puzzle,'" American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, 30 March 2016

"The Bearing of Theism on Modal Theory: Comments on Sullivan's 'Modal Ecumenism,'" American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, 16 April 2014

"Emergence, Resurrection, and Souls: Comments on O'Connor's 'Do Souls Matter for Christian Theology?'" Logos Workshop, University of Notre Dame, 5 May 2012

"Singular Propositions and Serious Actualism: A Reply to Merricks," Alvin Plantinga Retirement Celebration, 21 May 2010

"Reply to Steinhart's 'Stage Theory and Resurrection Replicas,'" American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting, 7 April 2007

"Counterpossibles and Impossible Worlds," Philosophy Symposium, California State University at San Bernadino, 16 Nov. 2001

"Reply to Yandell" (response to "Being Immortal and Being a Person"), Wheaton Philosophy Conference, 27 Oct. 2001

"Impossible Worlds and Counterfactuals," Philosophy Department Colloquium, University of California at Santa Barbara, 23 Feb. 2001

"Impossible Worlds and Counterfactual Semantics," Philosophy Department Colloquium, University of Notre Dame, 4 Dec. 1998

Other Selected Presentations

"Time Management for Immortals," Midwest Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 14 Nov. 2025

"Whether in the Blessed There is Hope," Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 5 May 2025

"Coherence in a Life of Everlasting Growth," Midwest Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 9 Oct. 2021

"Christian Hope and the End without End," Paul C. Wilt Phi Kappa Phi Faculty Lecture, Westmont College, 30 Sept. 2019

"The Paradox of the End without End," Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 21 Oct. 2016

"The Paradox of the End without End," Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 18 March 2016

"Is Composition an Intrinsic Relation?" Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 18 March 2011

"Bodies as Ecosystems," Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 18 April 2008

"Evolution and the Fall," The "Nature" of Belief: Evolutionary Explanation, Biological Function, and Divine Purpose, Calvin College, 4 Nov. 2005.

"How to Wiggle Out of Purgatory," Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 26 Feb. 2004

"Divine Conservation and Persistence through Time," Paul C. Wilt Phi Kappa Phi Faculty Lecture, Westmont College, 21 Oct. 2002

"Persistence and Divine Conservation," Midwest Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, Indiana University, 13 Sept. 2002

"Materialism and Persistence," panel discussion, "Dust of the Ground or Souls in Earthly Tents?" Westmont College, 16 Feb. 2002

"A Regress Argument for Restrictive Incompatibilism," Pittsburgh Graduate Philosophy Conference, March 2000

"Impossible Worlds and the Dependence of Abstracta on God," Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, 31 Jan. 1998

Classes Taught (at Westmont College unless noted)

Ancient and Medieval Philosophy
Ancient Philosophy
Augustinian Tradition I: Faith Seeking Understanding
Classical and Non-Classical Logics
Critical Reasoning and Logic
Introduction to Philosophy
Introduction to Philosophy (Honors)
Formal Logic
Logic and Metaphysics of Modality
Mathematics and Philosophy in Western Culture
Medieval Philosophy
Metaphysics
Philosophical Perspectives
Philosophical Perspectives (Honors)
Philosophical Theology
Philosophy of Religion
Senior Seminar: Free Will and Its Significance
Death and the Meaning of Life (Notre Dame)
First-Year Composition (Notre Dame)
University Seminar in Philosophy (Notre Dame)

Selected Professional and Service Activities

- served on the Board of Editorial Consultants of *Faith and Philosophy*, 2012-present
- was a member of the Mellon Philosophy as a Way of Life Network, 2018-present
- served on the Society of Christian Philosophers Pacific-Mountain Regional Committee, 2017-2019
- helped plan and host 2012 Society of Christian Philosophers Pacific Regional meeting at Westmont College
- attended the conference *Changing Faces: Cultural Competency, Diversity, and Reconciliation* at Trinity Christian College, Sept. 2011
- served as consultant to Russell Howell and James Bradley, editors of *Mathematics through the Eyes of Faith*, fall 2010
- served as a referee for the journals below:
 - *ACMS Journal and Proceedings*
 - *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*
 - *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*
 - *Dialectica*
 - *Ergo*
 - *Erkenntnis*
 - *European Journal of Analytic Philosophy*
 - *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*
 - *Faith and Philosophy*
 - *Journal of Analytic Theology*
 - *Journal of Philosophy*
 - *Religious Studies*
 - *Philosophical Quarterly*

- *Philosophical Studies*
- *Philosophy Compass*
- *Synthese*
- *Theoria*
- chaired the Freedom and Determinism colloquium at the Pacific Division meeting of the 2010 American Philosophical Association
- organized the Society of Christian Philosophers session at the 2006 Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association
- chaired the Society of Christian Philosophers session at the Eastern Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, 29 Dec. 2005
- co-organized an interdisciplinary colloquium on the mind/body problem, “Dust of the Ground or Souls in Earthly Tents?” with Thomas Fikes, Feb. 11-16, 2002
- served on the Society of Christian Philosophers Pacific Regional Committee, 2000-2003
- helped plan and host 2001 Society of Christian Philosophers Pacific Regional meeting at Westmont College
- served as faculty advisor for the California Iota (Westmont College) chapter of the Phi Sigma Tau honor society, 2001-2006
- participated in the Santa Barbarians (UCSB philosophy discussion group), 2000-2006