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Professor | Department of Philosophy | CSU Fullerton

ORCID 0000-0001-9445-9821

Employment

2006- Philosophy, California State University, Fullerton

2002-04 Philosophy, University of Aberdeen

Fellowships

2017-20 Academic Cross-Training Fellowship, John Templeton Foundation

2012-13 Centre for Human Evolution, Cognition and Culture, U British Columbia

2010-11 Center for Philosophy of Religion, University of Notre Dame

2005-06 National Endowment for the Humanities

2000-01 Center for Philosophy of Religion, University of Notre Dame

Education

2002 Ph.D., Philosophy, The Ohio State University

1993-94 Diploma, Chinese Language & History, University of Durham, UK

1990-95 B.A., Philosophy & Religion, Illinois Wesleyan University

Specializations

Applied Philosophy of the Social Sciences

Cultural Evolution

Empirical & Experimental Philosophy

Eighteenth-century Scottish Thought

Competence

Classical Chinese Philosophy

Psychology & Philosophy of Religion

Text Analytics & Digital Humanities

Books

5. Nichols, R. (Ed.) (2023). Y. Zhang, J. Xu, A. Hsieh & Anonymous, translators. 中國人道德體系的文化演進. 博客來. 新北市: 台灣。

4. Nichols, R. (Ed.) (2022). *The Routledge International Handbook of Morality, Cognition, Emotion, and Behavior in China*. Routledge: London.

3. Nichols, R., & de Cruz, H. (Eds.). (2016). *Advances in Religion, Cognitive Science, and Experimental Philosophy*. New York: Bloomsbury.

2. Nichols, R., Miller, F., & Smith, N. (2009). *Philosophy through science fiction*. New York: Routledge Press.

1. Nichols, R. (2007). *Thomas Reid's theory of perception*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Articles and papers in process *All papers peer reviewed except for **.

49. Chen, C., R. Moyzis, & R. Nichols. Culture-Biology Dualism. Forthcoming in *Advances in Culture and Psychology*. M. Gelfand, C. Chiu, and Y. Hong, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

48. Nichols, R., & N. Jones. 2022. Holistic cognitive style, Chinese culture, and the Sinification of Buddhism. *Res Philosophica* 100(1): 93-120. DOI: 10.11612/resphil.2263

47. Nichols, R. 2022. The Institution as an Explanatory Mechanism in Cultural Evolution: A

Review of Three Theories. *Journal of Cognition & Culture* 22:498-512. DOI: 10.1163/15685373-12340148

46. Nichols, R., & H. Moll. 2022. Introducing the Special Issue. *Journal of Cognition & Culture* 22:383-389. DOI: 10.1163/15685373-12340140 [The special issue is devoted to the theme of 'Explanatory mechanisms in cultural evolutionary theory and science' and includes essays by Pete Richerson, Hugo Mercier, Matthieu Charbonneau, Olivier Morin, Emma Flynn, Joëlle Proust, Henrike Moll. A product of grant #29.]

45. L. Chowdhury, Y. Zhang & R. Nichols. 2022. Footbinding and its cessation: An agent-based model adjudication of the labor market and evolutionary sciences hypothesis. Forthcoming in *Evolution & Human Behavior*. DOI: 10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2022.08.005. Open Access URL: <https://tinyl.io/70oU>.

44. Nichols, R. 2022. The status of women in Neolithic & pre-Imperial China: How bioarchaeological evidence informs ongoing debate. *World Archaeology* 53(2): 273-286. DOI: 10.1080/00438243.2021.2021108

43. Nichols, R. 2021. The Origin and Cultural Evolution of East Asian Cognitive Style: A Case Study of the Book of Changes (Yijing 易經). *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 21(5):389-413. DOI: 10.1163/15685373-12340118.

42. Nichols, R. 2021. Understanding the origins and cultural evolution of East Asian cognitive style: A case study of Traditional Chinese Medicine. *Journal of Cultural Cognitive Science* 5(1): 17-36. DOI:10.1007/s41809-021-00075-8

41. Nichols, R. (2021). Footbinding, hypergamy, and handicraft labor: Evaluating the Labor Market Hypothesis of footbinding. *Evolutionary Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40806-020-00271-9>

40. Nichols, R. (2021). The Unfulfilled Promise of Cross-Cultural, Interdisciplinary Ancient History. *Journal of Cognitive Historiography* 6. DOI 10.1558/jch.39458. Response by G.E.R. Lloyd, Cambridge U.

39. Nichols, R., H. Moll, & J. Mackey. (2020). How to create a cultural species: Evaluating three proposals. *Philosophical Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2021.1929915>
Response by Anton Killin, Victoria, and Ross Pain, ANU
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2021.1980205>

About #45, I am incredibly thankful to Laura Smith Chowdhury and Yile Zhang for their dedication not only to seeing a three-year project to completion, but for doing so with the utmost effort and expertise. Their work is why we could publish in a journal as esteemed as EHB.

38. Moll, H., R. Nichols, & E. Pueschel. 2020. Shared intentionality shapes humans' technical know-how. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, p. e172. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X20000163>.

The research and writing for #35, 38, 39 & 40 compelled me to examine in detail philosophy of science issues emergent in the nascent field of cultural evolution and offer gestures toward some theoretical corrections in this literature.

37. Moll, H., R. Nichols, & J.L. Mackey. (2020). Rethinking Human Development and the Shared Intentionality Hypothesis. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*. Online 10 June 2020. DOI: [10.1007/s13164-020-00489-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-020-00489-3). Response by Michael Tomasello, Duke & Max Plank.

36. Ryan Nichols, Edward Slingerland, Kristoffer Laigaard Nielbo, Peter Kirby & Carson Logan (2020) Supernatural agents and prosociality in historical China: micro-modeling the cultural evolution of gods and morality in textual corpora, *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, DOI: [10.1080/2153599X.2020.1742778](https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2020.1742778)

35. Nichols, R., H. Moll, & J. Mackey. (2019). Rethinking Cultural Evolutionary Psychology. *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 19: 477-492. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685373-12340070>.

34. Nichols, R. (2019) Systematic cognitive bias in the history of philosophy and its cultural transmission: A case study of Thomas Reid, religion, and science. *Journal of Cognitive Historiography* 5. <https://doi.org/10.1558/jch.33666>

Traditional interpretation of historical texts is valuable but also contains biases and confounds. These problems are exacerbated in Early Chinese philosophy. This is why I partnered with Kristoffer Nielbo and Ted Slingerland to apply new data science methods to canonical Classical Chinese texts and interpret our results with nuance and sophistication. #30 and #32 appear in flagship journals of major scholarly societies.

33. Nielbo, K., Nichols, R., & E. Slingerland. (2018). [Mining the Past: Data-Intensive Knowledge Discovery in the Study of Historical Textual Traditions](https://doi.org/10.1558/jch.31662). *Journal of Cognitive Historiography* 3(1-2): 2016 (N.B. Issue Date 29 Mar 2018). [10.1558/jch.31662](https://doi.org/10.1558/jch.31662). Republished in *Studying the religious mind: Methodology in the cognitive science of religion* (Equinox 2022).

32. Nichols, R., Nielbo K., Slingerland, E., Bergeton, U., Logan C., & S. Kleinman. (2018). [Modeling the contested relationship between Analects, Mencius, and Xunzi: Preliminary evidence from a Machine-Learning Approach](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911817000973). *Journal of Asian Studies* 77(1), 19-57. [10.1017/S0021911817000973](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911817000973)

31. Nichols, R., & Logan, C. (2018). High Gods, Low Gods, and Morality in Ancient China: Developing New Methods, Answering Old Questions. In R. G. Hornbeck & J. Barrett (Eds.), *Religious cognition in China: homo religiosus and the dragon* (pp. 161–177). New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

30. Slingerland, E., Nichols, R., Nielbo, K. & C. Logan. (2017). The Distant Reading of Religious Texts: A “Big Data” Approach to Mind-Body Concepts in Early China. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 85(4), 985-1016. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfw090>

29. Nichols, R. (2016). A sense of shame among the virtues. *Journal of Moral Education*, 45(2), 166–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2016.1174677>
28. Nichols, R. (2016). The Natural History of Shame and its Modification by Confucian Culture. In K. J. Clark (Ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Naturalism* (pp. 512–527). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118657775.ch35>
27. Nichols, R. (2015). [Early Confucianism is a system for social-functional influence and probably does not represent a normative ethical theory](#). *Dao* 14, 499-520. DOI:10.1007/s11712-015-9464-8
26. Nichols, R. (2015). [Civilizing humans with shame: How early Confucians altered inherited evolutionary norms through cultural programming to increase social harmony](#). *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 15, 254-284. DOI:10.1163/15685373-12342150
25. Nichols, R. (2015). Hypothesis-testing of the Humanities: The hard and soft humanities as two emerging cultures. *Southwest Philosophy Review* 31, 1-19. DOI:10.5840/swphilreview20153111
24. Nichols, R. (2014). [孝道——一种自然主义的解释](#). *Studies in Philosophy of Science and Technology* 31 (5), 98-106.
23. Nichols, R., & Yaffe, G. (2014, September 23). Thomas Reid. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Rev. ed.). Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reid/>
22. Nichols, R., Lynn, J., & Purzycki, B. G. (2014). [Toward a science of science fiction: Applying quantitative methods to genre individuation](#). *Scientific Study of Literature* 4, 25-45. DOI:10.1075/ssol.4.1.02nic
21. Nichols, R. (2014). [Re-evaluating the effects of the 1755 Lisbon earthquake on eighteenth-century minds: How cognitive science of religion improves intellectual history with hypothesis testing methods](#). *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 82, 1-40. DOI:10.1093/jaarel/lfu033
20. Wright, J., & Nichols, R. (2014). [The social cost of atheism: How perceived religiosity influences moral appraisal](#). *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 14, 115–137. DOI:10.1163/15685373-12342112

Very little work in philosophy of science has yet been done about cultural evolutionary theory despite the fact that this theory has grown rapidly and recently. (Exception: Tim Lewens' *Cultural Evolution*.) #19 & 26 contribute to philosophy of social science, cultural evolutionary theory, and Asian studies by offering multi-factorial, diachronic explanations of cross-cultural differences.

19. Nichols, R. (2013). [The origins and effects of Confucian filial piety: How culture was made to solve an evolutionary problem for parents.](#) *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 13: 201-230. [DOI:10.1163/15685373-12342092](#)
18. Draper, P., & Nichols, R. (2013). [Diagnosing cognitive biases in philosophy of religion.](#) *The Monist* 96, 422-448. [DOI:10.5840/monist201396319](#)
17. Nichols, R., & Callergård, R. (2011). [Thomas Reid on Reidian religious belief forming faculties.](#) *The Modern Schoolman* 88, 329-347. [DOI:10.5840/schoolman2011883/418](#)
16. Nichols, R. (2011). [A genealogy of Early Confucian moral psychology.](#) *Philosophy East & West* 61(4), 609-629. [DOI:10.1353/pew.2011.0057](#)
15. Nichols, R. (2011). The problem of disbelief in the gods for the cooperation enhancement account of supernatural punishment theory: A comment on Murray and Schloss. *Religion, Brain and Behavior* 1, 85-87. DOI:10.1080/2153599X.2011.558712
14. Yaffe, G., & R. Nichols. (2009). Thomas Reid. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stable URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reid/>.
- *13. Nichols, R. (2010). Thomas Reid. [The Routledge Companion to Epistemology](#) (pp. 717-729). Sven Berneker, ed. London: Routledge.
- *12. Nichols, R. (2009). [孝心的人类学起源](#)。 In K.J. Clark (Ed.), *On Happiness* (Xing Fu De Ao Mi) 《幸福的奥秘》 (2009) (pp.1-15). (Zheng Zhiyong (郑志勇), Trans.). Beijing: Shi Jie Zhi Shi Chu Ban She.
- *11. Nichols, R. (2009). Thomas Reid. In N. Trakakis & G. Oppy (Eds.), *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion* (Vol. 3, pp. 235-248). Durham, UK: Acumen Publishing.
10. Nichols, R. (2007). [Natural philosophy and its limits in the Scottish Enlightenment.](#) *The Monist* 90, 233-250. [DOI:10.5840/monist200790215](#)
9. Nichols, R. (2006). [Why is the history of philosophy worth our study?](#) *Metaphilosophy* 37, 34-52. [DOI:10.1111/j.1467-9973.2006.00411.x](#)
8. Nichols, R. (2004). Moral motivation and Christian theism. *Faith and Philosophy* 21, 175-194. DOI: 10.5840/faithphil20042123
7. Nichols, R. (2003). [Reid's inheritance from Locke, and how he overcomes it.](#) *Journal for the History of Philosophy* 41, 471-492. [DOI:10.1353/hph.2003.0062](#)
6. Nichols, R. (2003). Scientific content, testability, and the vacuity of Intelligent Design Theory. *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 77: 589-609. DOI: 10.5840/acpq200377433

5. Nichols, R. (2002). Learning and conceptual content in Reid's theory of perception. *The British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 10, 49-79. DOI: 10.1080/09608788.2002.10383080
4. Nichols, R. (2002). Visible figure and Reid's theory of visual perception. *Hume Studies* 28, 49-82. [DOI:10.1353/hms.2011.0196](https://doi.org/10.1353/hms.2011.0196)
3. Nichols, R. (2003). [Reid on fictional objects and the way of ideas](#). In S. Read (Ed.), *The Philosophy of Thomas Reid*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Reprinted from *The Philosophical Quarterly* 52, pp. 582-601, 2002). [DOI:10.1111/1467-9213.0028](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9213.0028)
2. Nichols, R. (1999). [Space, individuation and the identity of indiscernibles: Leibniz's triumph over Strawson](#). *Studia Leibnitiana* 31(2), 181-195. [DOI:http://www.jstor.org/stable/40694512](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40694512)
1. Nichols, R. (1999). [Actions, their effects, and preventable evil](#). *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 46, 127-145. [DOI:10.1023/A:1003886616457](https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1003886616457)

Awards and Grants

32. The Anatomy of Agency: A Cross-Cultural Experimental Philosophy of Religion Investigation into Causation, Free Will, and Responsibility, Daniel Lim, Co-PI, for support of several experiments and data science work with Chinese language corpora to investigate hypotheses about cross-cultural and cross-religion variability in beliefs about free will and determinism, \$217,000, July 2022 – June 2024. From John Templeton Foundation via Hillsdale College. Hillsdale Award Number 1003.

31. Philosophy of Science for Cultural Evolution: Proposing a Research Network. Recruiting, planning, and running an online-only research network aimed to improve and advance significant work in the philosophy of science dedicated to problems emerging in cultural evolution theory and science. Project advisors: Tim Lewens, Kim Sterelny, and Grant Ramsey. \$249,550, April 2022 – September 2023. John Templeton Foundation award number 62377.

My ongoing research in cultural evolution was stunted without delving back into philosophy of science issues first tackled in grad school. In particular, I needed to improve my knowledge of inter-theoretic relations, bridge laws, and explanatory pluralism. This is in the context of results of a survey of members of the Cultural Evolution Society showing that the top challenge in the field is "knowledge synthesis." The John Templeton Foundation had faith in me to run a small group composed of 15 researchers to look at neglected problems in philosophy of science from cultural evolution, #31.

30. Grand Challenges in the Philosophy of Cultural Evolution, John Templeton Foundation, for course buyouts facilitating a one-semester leave to write a white paper about philosophy of science needs in the emergent area of cultural evolution, \$47,400, Fall 2021. JTF Award number 62377.

29. Understanding Cultural Evolutionary Mechanisms of Human Knowledge Transmission, Albert and Elaine Borchard Foundation, \$35,000, for underwriting of a workshop to be held at Chateau de la Bretesche, Missillac, France, July 2020.

28. Understanding China's Changing Moral Psychology, The Templeton World Charities Foundation, \$217,817, for support of a radically interdisciplinary research project that gathers world-leading researchers across fields to a workshop and publishes a book of papers (in English and Chinese), January 2019-June 2021.

27. Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, California State University, Fullerton, 'China's Moral Crisis: A Planning Grant to Create Interdisciplinary Understanding,' \$14,993 for preliminary research for and writing of an external grant to be submitted to Templeton World Charities Foundation, Fall 2017 – Spring 2018.

26. Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, California State University, Fullerton, course release for the 2017-18 Junior/Senior Intramural Grants Program, \$6750, for 'Interdisciplinary Research on Kinship & Morality in Ancient China: Machine-learning with an authoritative corpus' project, Fall 2017.

Precious little of the experimental, empirical, and philosophical research I do would have been possible without the faith of Ted Slingerland (#23) and program officers at JTF (#25). Retraining in these two projects transformed my research, and left me humbled and thankful.

25. Academic Cross-Training Fellowship, The John Templeton Foundation, \$217,400, for three-years of retraining in statistics, psychology, and biological anthropology, Fall 2017-Spring 2020. (CSUF #50143817 & JTF #60704.)

24. Dean's Office, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Travel Award, for travel to DIGHUMLAB's Digital Humanities Week, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark, 29 September-3 October 2014.

23. Centre for Human Evolution, Cognition and Culture, University of British Columbia, Funding to host 'Developing Virtue, East & West' conference, \$5000, Summer 2014.

22. Centre for Human Evolution, Cognition and Culture, University of British Columbia, course buyouts to continue work begun 2012-2013, \$6250, Summer 2014.

21. Religion and Moral Development: Contemporary & Historical Perspectives, Work Package 6 of Templeton World Charities Foundation, 'The Chinese Challenge,' for experiments with human subjects in China and the U.S. on cross-cultural differences in religious and moral cognition, and for quantitative textual research on a corpus of ancient Chinese texts, \$83,000, July 2011-June 2014.

20. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences, California State University at Fullerton, supplemental funding in support of the grant described in #19, \$36,000, August 2012-May 2013.

19. Centre for Human Evolution, Cognition and Culture, University of British Columbia, research fellowship on the first year of the five-year 'The Evolution of Religion' project, for research on cultural evolution and religion in historical China, \$45,000 CAD, August 2012-May 2013.

18. John Templeton Foundation Grant, administered by Oxford University's Centre for Anthropology and Mind, for Cognitive Science of Religion experiments on Chinese religious belief and ancestor veneration, \$17,200; supplemental award from Cal State Fullerton Summer Research grant, \$5000, August 2011-August 2013.
17. Research Fellowship at Center for Philosophy of Religion, University of Notre Dame, under the "The Problem of Evil in Modern and Contemporary Thought" project (co-PIs, M. Rea & S. Newlands), full year research salary, \$70,000, August 2010-May 2011.
16. Dean's Office, Humanities and Social Sciences, International Travel Award, for travel to seminar on Confucianism, run by Beijing Foreign Studies University, in Qufu, Shandong, \$1000, July 2011.
15. Intramural Research Award, Office of Grants and Contracts, CSUF, for 'Philosophical Arguments and Cognitive Resistance: A Set of Experiments in Philosophy of Religion' project, \$3000, Summer 2010.
14. China Exchange Travel Grant, from Associate Vice President's Office, for travel with official CSUF delegation to Fudan University, Shanghai, \$1000, February 2010.
13. John Templeton Foundation Grant, administered by Oxford University's Centre for Anthropology and Mind, for Cognitive Science of Religion research on Divine Intentionality and Divine Morality, £23,399 (= \$37,630), September 2009-August 2010.
12. International Travel Grant, Faculty Development Center, Cal State Fullerton, \$1000, October 2007.
11. John Templeton Foundation Foreign Teaching Grant, \$3000, administered through the 'Advancing Scholarship on Science and Religion in Chinese Philosophy and Religious Studies' program, Kelly Clark, director, March 2008.
10. College of the Humanities & Social Sciences, CSUF, \$6250, course-release grant for writing grants, Spring 2007.
9. Earhart Foundation Grant, \$17,000, awarded by the Board of Directors, February 2006-July 2006.
8. National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, \$24,000, September 2005-February 2006.
7. Kristeller-Popkin Travel Fellowship, \$2000, awarded by the Board of Directors of the *Journal for the History of Philosophy*, March 2005.
6. Graduate Student Travel Prize, Central Division of the APA, \$250, April 2002.
5. Visiting Graduate Student Fellowship, University of Notre Dame, Center for Philosophy of Religion, Professor Alvin Plantinga, director, \$15,000, Academic year 2000-2001.

4. Graduate Student Travel Prize, Pacific Division of the APA, \$300, March 2001
3. Graduate Student Travel Prize, Eastern Division of the APA, \$250, December 1999.
2. The Ohio State University International Travel Dissertation Research Grant, used for research on Thomas Reid's papers in the Birkwood Special Collection Library, University of Aberdeen, \$1800, June 1998.
1. Lois C. Browns Scholarship for Study in the United Kingdom, used for study at the University of Durham, England, \$4000, 1993-1994.

Teaching from Fall 2015 – Spring 2021

F20 PHIL 315 Philosophical Argument and Writing
 SP20 PHIL 350 Asian Philosophy
 SP17 PHIL 325 Philosophy of Sex and Love
 SP17 HONR 302T How China Became Chinese
 F16 PHIL 350 Asian Philosophy
 F16 PHIL 325 Philosophy of Sex and Love
 F16 PHIL 325 Philosophy of Sex and Love
 SP16 PHIL 350 Asian Philosophy
 SP16 PHIL 325 Philosophy of Sex and Love
 SP16 PHIL 101 Meaning, Purpose and the Good Life
 F15 PHIL 325 Philosophy of Sex and Love
 F15 PHIL 315 Philosophical Argument and Writing
 F15 PHIL 100 Introduction to Philosophy

Service from Fall 2015 – Spring 2021

To the Department of Philosophy

PPR Committee (2018-19)
 Curriculum Committee (2016-2017, 2017-18, 2018-19)
 DPC Committee (2015-16)
 Miscellaneous Course Fees Coordinator (2015-16)
 Grad Check Committee (2016-17)
 Non-Tenure Faculty Review Committee (2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20)
 Ellington Committee (2015-16)
 Alamshah Award Committee (2018-19)
 Alumni Committee (2018-19)
 Philosophy Club Advisor (2019-20)
 50th Annual Symposium Conference Organizer (SP 2020)
 Departmental Hiring Committee (2017-18)
 Scheduling (2015-16)

To the College of Humanities & Social Sciences

HSS Curriculum Committee (2020-

HSS Curriculum Committee (2014-15)
Guardian Scholars Volunteer (2015-16)

To the University

Faculty advisor, Ultimate Frisbee Club (2010-present)
H&SS Speaker Series lecturer (November 15, 2016)

To the Profession

National Endowment for the Humanities panelist (2009)
Referee (many journals)
American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division Program Committee member (2005-2008, 2014-2017)

To the Community

Volunteer grant writer at spicygreenbook.com (2020- Please check out the url!)