

Omar Hussein

Statement of Purpose

I am applying to the MA in Philosophy at CSULB to pursue further advanced study of philosophy with the ultimate goal of pursuing a PhD in the discipline. I have broad interests in philosophy, but my intended focus is philosophy of mind, particularly epistemic approaches to the mind-body problem (e.g. the work of Daniel Stoljar) and interdisciplinary work on the borders of neuroscience, cognitive science, and philosophy. Secondary interests of mine include logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, and metaphysics more broadly. Ultimately, my dream is to become a tenure-track faculty member in philosophy, but I am aware that the job market in the humanities can be quite brutal. Regardless, I am committed to pursuing a PhD in philosophy for its own rewards, and I will be proud to have earned a doctorate in the field even if doing so does not translate into a career change for me.

My dedication to pursuing a doctorate in philosophy has grown steadily throughout my academic and professional careers, and I have completed numerous courses to prepare me for the MA program at CSULB. In fall 2015, I earned an A in Dr. Nellie Wieland's graduate seminar in philosophy of language (PHIL 584) at CSULB, an experience that deepened my knowledge of analytic philosophy and boosted my confidence in my ability to excel as an MA student in philosophy. In addition, from fall 2017 to the present, I have completed numerous philosophy courses through Long Beach City College and the LA Community College District, including courses in symbolic logic, ethics, bioethics, modern European philosophy, and Ancient Greek philosophy (in progress). I particularly enjoyed symbolic logic, and I have maintained a 4.0 GPA in all of this coursework. In addition, my earlier graduate training in both education and English literature has given me high-level academic research and writing skills that will serve me well in the MA program, along with skills in reading and interpreting archaic texts (Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and Middle English) that will be helpful in any future coursework on ancient philosophy. Overall, my prior studies have prepared me to excel in the MA program at CSULB.

In addition, my professional experiences have further strengthened my academic writing and research skills, along with giving me a wealth of teaching experiences and subject-matter literacies that will be invaluable as I continue my education in philosophy. Since spring 2017, I have worked full-time as the Graduate Writing Specialist at the CSULB Graduate Studies Resource Center, a role in which I help graduate students from all disciplines improve their

academic writing skills. In addition to one-on-one consultations with students, I also conduct workshops on numerous writing-related topics and assist with the planning and hosting of major academic events, including the annual Graduate Research Conference. All of these experiences have helped “professionalize” me as an aspiring academic and ensured that my writing, research, and planning skills remain sharp and up to date.

Prior to working at CSULB, I taught high school chemistry and physics in the LA Unified School District (my BA was in English, but I completed substantial elective coursework in science and mathematics). My mathematical and scientific literacy allowed me to easily pass the qualifying exams (CSETs) to teach high school chemistry and physics, and I remain licensed to teach both subjects. This solid background in foundational science will facilitate my future work in philosophy of mind and related areas (e.g. cognitive science, philosophy of science).

Finally, I have published in *Watermark*, the CSULB student journal, and presented at scholarly conferences. While these papers were in English literature, not philosophy, the simple acts of presenting and publishing attest to my motivation and ability in scholarly production.

While my employment on campus makes CSULB a convenient destination, the philosophy department at CSULB suits my goals and interests in more important ways. First, the department is open to admitting students who, like me, have BAs in fields other than philosophy and are strengthening their preparation for doctoral programs. Second, the specializations of CSULB faculty overlap with many of my interests, including philosophy of mind, cognitive science, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science. In particular, Dr. Wayne Wright’s work on the role of phenomenal structure in the color realism vs. color eliminativism debate is relevant to my interests in philosophy of mind and cognitive science. I have also been inspired by Dr. Corey Wright’s work on explanatory pluralism in cognitive science and Dr. Nellie Wieland’s work on indirect reports in natural languages, and I have had productive and encouraging discussions with both professors. In sum, I am certain that CSULB can offer the breadth and depth of philosophical education to make me a more competitive PhD applicant.

Overall, I am confident that my academic and professional experiences have prepared me to succeed in the MA in Philosophy at CSULB and in my future career. While my path toward a doctorate has been somewhat unconventional, so far, I am fully committed to philosophy as my intellectual vocation. I look forward to the chance to continue my studies at CSULB as I take the next steps in my training as a professional philosopher.