

**Dáithí [Dawh-Hee] (David) Aaron Rooney**

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**Education**

PhD candidate in Communication Studies, specializing in Rhetoric, Language and Political Communication, University of Texas at Austin, September 2020-May 2025. 4.0 GPA.

My dissertation examines emerging accounts of non-human rhetorics (e.g., animals, objects, AI) as they intersect with narratives of race, body, and gender. Drawing on Derrida, I outline an account of human language as a subset of a broader general text where all forms of existence are constantly writing onto each other and being written on—linguistically, genetically, chemically, etc. I suggest that this balances tensions between the new materialist critique of textuality and the rhetorical critique of reductive materialism by outlining a non-representational approach to non-human rhetoricity. I further argue that this broadens our understanding of non-human positionality into rhetorical networks, which exceeds genus/species/matter and is re-written by cultural/racial anxieties about instinct, the body and alienation through symbolic language.

M.A. Communication Studies, Baylor University, May 2020. 3.95 GPA.

Thesis examines the use of animal metaphor by nuclear abolitionists during the Cold War and the 2015 ecological documentary *Racing Extinction*.

B.S. Industrial and Labor Relations, focus on Disability Studies & Employment, Labor Law, and Rhetoric of the Labor Movement. Minor in Law and Society from the Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University, 2018.

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**Article Publications**

\*= graduate student co-author. ^= shared first authorship

^Rooney, David, ^S.M. Muller, and Cecilia Cerja\* “‘Long Live the (Liver) King: Carnivore Diets, Alt-Right Influencers, and the Rhetoric of White Nationalism” *Frontiers in Communication* [Special Issue “Media, Racism, Speciesism: Issues and Solutions for Creaturely Racism in the Anthropocene” edited by Natalie Khazaal, Ellen Gorsevksi and Tobias Linné]. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2024.1338653>.

Rooney, David and Muller, S.M. “Woke Sausages at the Cracker Barrel: Gastronomism and the Synecdochic Politics of Plant-Based Meat,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* (2023): 26(3) (in production for Winter 2023 issue).

Rooney, David. “‘A Primordial Situation’: Metonymical Linkages in US Newspaper Coverage of Wet Markets.” *Environmental Communication* (2022): 16(6), 836-849; <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2022.2125548>.

Rooney, David. “‘All Fishing is Wildlife Poaching:’ Nonhuman Animal Imagery and Mutual Avowal in *Racing Extinction* and *Seaspiracy*.” *Journalism and Media* (2022): 3(2), 257-277; <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia3020020>. [Special Issue, “Communication in Defense of Nonhuman Animals during an Extinction and Climate Crisis,” edited by Carrie P. Freeman and Núria Almiron.]

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**Chapters in Textbooks**

Rooney, David, Tyler Welsh, Johnathan Henson, Millie A. Harrison, & Jessica Knapp. “Argumentation & Persuasive Claims” In *Professional Communication Skills*, edited by Nathaniel R. Repay, Millie A. Harrison, & John A. Daly. Toronto: Tophatmonocole Corp., 2023.

**Rooney, David,** Timothy Steffensmier, Jessica Knapp, & Jessica L. Ford. "Persuasive Presentations" In *Professional Communication Skills*, edited by Nathaniel R. Repay, Millie A. Harrison, & John A. Daly. Toronto: Tophatmonocole Corp., 2023.

### **Research in Progress**

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**Rooney, David.** \*\*\*omitted for peer review\*\*\* (revise and resubmit decision 14 September 2023, returned November 2023).

**Rooney, David.** \*\*\*omitted for peer review\*\*\* (revise and resubmit decision April 2023, return date intended March 2024).

**David Rooney.** *Soy Boy Beta Cuck: Alt-Right Food Rhetoric and the Meatification of Right-Wing Extremism*. Book manuscript. Two chapters written, one additional drafted.

### **External Projects & Funding**

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City/county attitudes towards plant-based purchasing minimums

*Mercy for Animals* (October 2023-Jan 2024)

~\$9,000 total funding (\$4,000 personal grant)

- Measures local attitudes in Eugene, Oregon, LA County, California and Orange County, California on a hypothetical policy that would ensure a portion of local budgets concerning food are spent on plant-based alternatives.
- Survey-based data collection of 1500 respondents (500 per area) to measure perception towards proposed policy above.
- \$4,000 personal research grant, other funds acquired for participant recruitment through Dynata.
- Collected and analyzed data, wrote short research report for legislators to understand benefits of such a legislation and public attitudes. My report can be found [here](#).
- \*\*\***This bill was passed into law in LA County on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024!** \*\*\*
  - The law requires that LA County:
    - 1) prioritize plant-based foods in food-purchasing (annual budget ~\$21m)
    - 2) track GHG emissions from their food purchasing.
  - Press release [here](#).
  - Text of legislation [here](#).

Animal Agriculture Messaging & Environmental NGOs

*Mercy for Animals* (April-October 2023)

~\$2,000 funding

- Research project titled "Willing but Uncertain: Exploring Hesitations, Motivations and Perceptions of Animal Agriculture Advocacy from a Nationwide Survey of Environmental Organizations."
- Qualtrics survey (mix of open-ended and multiple-choice questions) sent to 638 environmental organizations across USA with >10 staff, ~11% full completion rate (70), across 27 states.
- Deliverables include a white paper report for policymakers and organizers (completed Oct 2023), production of a video interview (completed Oct 2023) and potential journal article (ongoing).
- Report, data, and interview can be found [here](#).

### **Awards/Recognition**

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- UT-Austin University Continuing Graduate Fellowship (\$52,000).
  - Nominated by department and competitively selected across university-wide applicants. One year fellowship.

- #SundaySpotlight from NCA's Activism + Social Justice Division Grad Student Committee for my work with environmental advocacy organizations. Link [here](#).
- Top paper (all conference submissions) at IECA's 2023 Conference on Communication and Environment.
- Top student paper (#2 overall) in Environmental Communication at 2023 NCA.
- Received a Fall 2023 "Moody Shoutout" a program by UT's Center for Advancing Teaching Excellence where students "shoutout" hardworking or excellent faculty/staff. Can be found [here](#)

### Book Reviews

**Rooney, David.** Review of *Impersonating Animals: Rhetoric, Ecofeminism, and Animal Rights Law* by S. Marek Muller. *Environmental Communication Division blog*, December 22, 2021. <https://sites.google.com/view/ecdnca/blog>.

**Rooney, David.** Review of *Climate in Motion: Science, Empire, and the Problem of Scale* by Deborah R. Coen. *Not Even Past*, December 4, 2020. <https://notevenpast.org/climate-in-motion-science-empire-and-the-problem-of-scale-by-deborah-r-coen-2018/>.

**Rooney, David & Vilo, Felipe.** Review of *Future Remains: A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene* ed. Gregg Mitman, Marco Armiero and Robert S. Emmett. *Not Even Past*, May 11, 2021. <https://notevenpast.org/ihs-climate-in-context-future-remains-a-cabinet-of-curiosities-for-the-anthropocene-2018/>.

### Conference Presentations

**Rooney, David.** (2024, May) "'Nobody died because this guy got a pig heart:' Auto-motricity and criminality in the first pig-to-human heart transplant," Rhetoric Society of America 21<sup>st</sup> Biennial Conference, 2024 (Denver, Colorado).

**Rooney, David.** (2023, November) "'They want to kill our cows. That means you're next:' White Masculine Victimhood and the Green New Deal's War on Hamburgers," *Environmental Communication Division*, 109th National Communication Association Convention, 2023 (National Harbor, Maryland).

- **Top Student Paper in Environmental Communication (\$150)**
- **Environmental Communication Top Papers Panel (#2 paper)**

**Rooney, David.** (2023, November) "AI-Symbiosis and Animal Experiments: Neuralink's reconfiguration of the Human," *Cross Examination Debate Association Division*, 109th National Communication Association Convention, 2023 (National Harbor, Maryland).

**Rooney, David** and Muller, M.S. (2023, June 5-9) "Woke Sausages:" Reading the Gastronomist Backlash to Cracker Barrel's plant-based change," the 2023 Conference on Communication and Environment (COCE), (Harrisonburg, Virginia).

- **2023 COCE Top Paper award (all conference submissions).**

**Rooney, David.** (2022, November) "No Dogs Left Behind: Negotiating Animality in the Dog-Meat Trade," *Critical and Cultural Studies Division*, 108th National Communication Association Convention, 2022 (New Orleans, Louisiana).

**Rooney, David.** (2022, November) "He died like a dog:" Trump, Conan the Dog and animal metaphor," *Public Address Division*, 108th National Communication Association Convention, 2022 (New Orleans, Louisiana).

**Rooney, David.** (2022, November) "#NoBonesDay: Multi-species engagement and Animal Rendering in Pandemic Times," *TikTok on the Clock: An Investigation into Subject Formation on*

*TikTok* Panel, 108th National Communication Association Convention, 2022 (New Orleans, Louisiana).

Scott, Craig, Karen Schlag & **David Rooney**. (2022, May) "Naming the Unnamed: Technological and Other Understandings of Anonymity and Anonymous Communication," 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Communication Association Conference, 2022 (Paris, France).

**Rooney, David**. (2020) "Pet Rhetoric: Yulin Dog Meat Festival and the Racial Economy of Animal Hospitality," Rhetoric Society of America Biennial Conference, 2020 (Portland, Oregon) \*Conference subsequently canceled due to COVID–19 pandemic.

**Rooney, David**. (2020) "'Remember Your Humanity and Forget the Rest:' Animal Metaphor in Nuclear War Discourse," *Public Address Division*, 106th National Communication Association Convention, 2020 (Indianapolis, Indiana).

**Rooney, David**. (2020) "'Killer-Animals:' Understanding Trump's Animalization of Immigrants," *International and Intercultural Communication Division* 106th National Communication Association Convention, 2020 (Indianapolis, Indiana).

**Rooney, David**. (2020) "Animal Vanishing: Animetaphor and Climate Change in *Racing Extinction*," *Visual Communication Division*, 106th National Communication Association Convention, 2020 (Indianapolis, Indiana). \*did not present due to technological difficulties with the virtual conference.

**Rooney, David**. (2020) "Anthropoiosis in Nuclear Warfare: The Comfortable Vocabulary of Savagery and Animality," Southern States Communication Association Convention, 2020 (Frisco, TX) \*Conference subsequently canceled due to COVID–19 pandemic.

**Rooney, David**. (2020). "Disrupting Whiteness in Animal Rights Discourse: Tilikum v. SeaWorld and the Slavery Metaphor," Southern States Communication Association Convention, 2020 (Frisco, TX) \*Conference subsequently canceled due to COVID–19 pandemic.

**Rooney, David**. (February 2020). Criminal Animals: Trump, MS-13 and 'Bad immigrants,' Camp Rhetoric 2020: Rhetorics of Citizenship hosted by Arnold-Ebbitt Interdisciplinary Rhetoricians at Pennsylvania State University, February 29-29, 2020 (State College, PA).

**Rooney, David**. (December 2017) "Animal Death as First Death: Multiplicity and Finitude in Derrida," Derrida and Literature Conference for graduate students within English, Comparative Literature or French programs at Cornell University, December 2017. Sponsored by the Class of 1916 Chair, Dr. Johnathan Culler.

## **Teaching Experience**

### *University*

**CMS 342K: Political Communication** (UT-Austin)

Fall 2023—Spring 2024

### *Instructor*

- Upper-division course of 40-50 upper-level students (juniors, seniors). Responsible for assigning readings, lecturing, assignment generation, exam writing, etc. The course has an Ethics Flag and a Writing Flag, and assignments consist of both long-form essays and two exams.
- Assisted by a graduate TA.
- **Fall 2023 Recipient of "Moody Shoutout"** a program by UT's Center for Advancing Teaching Excellence where students "shoutout" hardworking or excellent faculty and staff. Can be found [here](#).

- “Dr. Rooney is one of my favorite professors! Not only is he extremely knowledgeable, but he is passionate and inviting! He does his best to make sure each student truly understands and relates to the complex content. He goes as far as to provide 3 or 4 examples with efforts to cover all grounds and really spark student application and knowledge. Not only do I learn a tremendous amount each class period, but I leave feeling curious and with a new perspective. I am really grateful for Dr. Rooney, as he has equipped me with knowledge and tools that I will reflect upon my whole life. Thank you!”

**CMS 306M: Professional Communication** (UT-Austin)      Fall 2022—Spring 2023

*Assistant Instructor*

- Acted as sole instructor. Responsible for generating lectures, lecturing, assignment generation, exam writing, textbook generation, grading, etc.
- Normal student enrollment ~25 per section. 2 sections taught per semester. The course has an Ethics Flag, mostly consists of presentations and short essays.

**CMS 342K: Political Communication** (UT-Austin)      Fall 2021—Spring 2022

*Assistant Instructor*

- Responsible for 100% of course grading and student correspondence, including weekly office hours and managing Canvas page and the gradebook.
- Normal student enrollment >50. The course has a Writing Flag and largely consists of long-form essays.

**CMS 359T: How People Talk** (UT-Austin)      Spring 2021

*Teaching Assistant*

- Grading short-form and long-form essays and held office hours/student correspondence.
- Responsible for grading 75% of class assignments and attendance. The course had a Writing Flag.

**CMS 338: Leadership Stories** (University of Texas-Austin)      Fall 2020

*Teaching Assistant*

- Grading and correspondence with students for an asynchronous course with an Ethics flag.
- Grading 10-20 short essays a week and 50 long-form essays over semester.

**CMS CSS 1301/1302: Public Speaking** (Baylor University)      Sept 2018-May 2020

*Teaching Assistant*

- Teaching 5 sections to ~12 students a section (~60 total). Responsible for administering and grading all class assignments/exams, attendance for those students. Included instruction to many ESL students (from 2018-2020, roughly 1/5 of students every semester).
- Experience with online teaching/grading (Spring 2020) with Canvas/PitchVantage as well as lectures (to ~200 students) in Spring of 2019 when instructor was ill.

*Forensics*

**Wyoming Debate Union** (University of Wyoming)

October 2020- Present

*Coach*

- Advising and coaching college debaters on topics related to US alliance commitments and defense pacts (2020), anti-trust and competition law (2021), vesting legal rights and duties in non-human entities (AI, animals, nature) (2022), as well as nuclear targeting and launch policy (2023).
- Includes both individual instruction and lectures, particularly on philosophical criticisms for each the topic.

**Jayhawk Debate Institute** (University of Kansas)

June 2022/23/24

*Instructor*

- Lead a “lab”—class—of about 20-30 high school students on debate strategy for a topic on fiscal redistribution: the pros and cons of Universal Basic Income, reforming Social Security, and a federal jobs guarantee.
- Included teaching argumentation basics and construction, research guidelines and scholarly citations, as well as personalized advice and skills training.

**Glenn R. Capp Debate Forum** (Baylor University)

July 2018-May 2020

*Coach*

- Coaching college debaters, including a team ranked #9 in the country and younger/novice debaters to regional championships. Frequent traveling and individual instruction.

**Baylor Summer Debate workshop**

July 8-15, 2018/19

*Instructor*

- Instruction to high school debaters on debate strategy for a topic about reforming immigration policies. Included: teaching the format of argument construction, debate styles, how to produce files and research, giving lectures on history of critical thought, judging debates.

**Gonzaga Debate Institute**

July 15-28, 2017

*Instructor*

- Teaching debate to high school students on the topic of education reform. Included: lesson planning, lectures to ~125, RA oversight.

**Cornell Johannesburg and Dubai Partnership**

June 8-22, 2017

*Instructor*

- Teaching debate strategy and fundamentals to ~50 college students and running a parliamentary debate style tournament (SA)
- Teaching rhetorical advocacy and communication to ~25 young professionals (some MBA students, some working full-time) (UAE).

**Cornell International Summer Debate Camp**

July 27- August 7, 2014/15/17

*Counselor/Instructor*

- Lectured and developed activities for ~60 high school students (mostly international, ESL). Judged debates, lectured, and developed student activities.

*Other*

**Splash! At Cornell Organizer & Teacher**

2014-2018

- Helped organize and run a program for hundreds of local low-income high school students to travel to Cornell to take classes on various subjects from Cornell professors and students (for free).
- Taught classes on a variety of topics, ranging from the concept of speciesism to the history of the American prison industrial complex to students and parents.

**Invited/Guest Lectures**

“Navigating the Publication Process as a Doctoral Student.” In *Rhetoric of Expertise* (graduate seminar taught by Dr. Johanna Hartelius), Department of Communication Studies, University of Texas at Austin, February 2023.

**Service & Other Activities**

**Writer**

*Faunalytics*, 2024—

- Translating scientific findings on animal welfare and environmental policy for a broader audience.

**Journal Reviewer**

*Environmental Communication*, 2024.

**Conference Submission Reviewer**

Rhetoric Society of America, 2 divisions (Public Rhetoric, Rhetorical Criticism), 2023.

Southern States Communication Association, 2021

National Communication Association Conference, Environmental Communication Division, 2023.

**Committee Member**

UT-Austin Communication Graduate Student Community—Professional Development Committee, 2023-present.

- Organized research development workshop for graduate students (fall 2023).
- Organized CV workshop for graduate students (spring 2024).

**Rhetoric & Public Affairs** (Michigan State University Press)

Sept. 2018-May 2020

*Editorial Intern*

- Copy-editing for works to be published in the journal. Included making edits on grammar/wording, checking reference authenticity and format/citation corrections.

**Cornell Disability Studies Journal** *Senior Editor*

2016-2018

- Editing papers submitted for publication, helped organize the publication of journal issues surrounding disability studies, legal discrimination, and literary analysis.

**Cornell Forensics Society (Speech & Debate)**

2013-2018

- Quarter-finalist NDT 2018, Semi-finalist CEDA Nationals 2017/18.
- Policy Debate captain from 2014-18, developed a particular interest in coaching younger debate students on the team, as I had started policy debate as a novice in college.
- **Public Debates:**
  1. with a representative from PETA on banning animal testing,
  2. on the efficacy of the War on Terror with West Point cadets at Cornell and at the Cornell Club in NYC,
  3. at the Gonzaga Debate Institute on education reform.
- **Community Service:** instructor in the MacCormick Secure Center Debate and Discussion Club, a weekly debate instruction to juvenile prisoners sentenced in adult criminal court. We would give lectures on topics the students were interested in (for example, lectures from faculty on Malcolm X's legacy, lectures on Aristotle etc.) and facilitate student debates on topics of their choosing, bringing literature to help them prepare (the facility lacked adequate educational supplies).

**Cornell Students for Animal Rights**

2014-2018

- Helped organize events on campus. Notable: Bringing activist Christopher Sebastian to speak on race and queer violence as it connects to animal liberation (Spring 2018).
- Canada Goose protest and pamphlet work in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018.
- Worked on student outreach projects with representatives from *PETA* and Mercy for Animals.