

Matthew R. Adams
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APPOINTMENTS

2018-2020 Postdoctoral Fellow, McCoy Family Center for Ethics in Society, Stanford University

EDUCATION

2018 Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Virginia
Dissertation: A Contractualist Theory of Nonideal Justice
Advisor: A. John Simmons

2017 Visiting Research Fellow, Brown University

2011 B.Phil. in Philosophy, University of Oxford
Thesis: Regulative and Constitutive Principles in Kant's Epistemology

2009 B.A., Trinity College Dublin
First Class Honors, Gold Medal

RESEARCH INTERESTS

AOS Political Philosophy, Ethical Theory, Applied Ethics

AOC Philosophy of Law, Aesthetics, Ancient Philosophy, Kant

PUBLICATIONS

Papers

- (1) "Plato's Theory of Punishment and Penal Code in the *Laws*," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*.
- (2) "The Aesthetic Value of Local Food," *The Monist*.

Chapters

- (1) "The Value of Ideal Theory," in *John Rawls: Debating the Major Questions*, ed. Jon Mandle and Sarah Roberts-Cady, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Books

- (1) Co-Editor of John D. Arras's *Methods in Bioethics: The Way We Reason Now*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Book Reviews

- (1) "Virtue and Law in Plato and Beyond by Julia Annas," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*.

Under Review (titles redacted for blind review)

- (1) On ideological critique and nonideal theory," R&R at *The European Journal of Political Theory*.
- (2) On ideal theory and our epistemic limitations.
- (3) (with Nicholas Rimell) On ontological objections to the Future-Like-Ours argument.

In Preparation

- (1) "Nonideal Justice, Fairness, and Affirmative Action."
- (2) "The Representation of All Generations: A Contractualist Model of Intergenerational justice."
- (3) (with Ross Mittiga) "Material Scarcity & Scalar Justice."
- (4) "An Egalitarian Puzzle about Biological Enhancement and Climate Justice."
- (5) "Methodological Pluralism and the Ambitions of Bioethics."
- (6) "Access to Free Healthcare and Free Healthy Food."
- (7) "Is Being Apolitical a Peculiar Virtue or Vice?"

PRESENTATIONS

Peer Refereed Presentations

- 2019 "Nonideal Justice, Fairness, and Affirmative Action"—The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Society, New Orleans (paper).
- 2018 "An Ideological Critique of Nonideal Methodology"—Western Political Science Association, San Francisco (paper).
"An Ideological Critique of Nonideal Methodology"—The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Society, New Orleans (paper).
(with Nicholas Rimell) "A Dilemma for the Future-Like-Ours Argument Against Abortion"—American Philosophical Association Central Division, Chicago (poster).
- 2017 "The Aesthetic Value of Local Food"—Annual Meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics, New Orleans (paper).
"Ideal Theory, Epistemic Access, and the Values of Justice"—MANCEPT Workshop in Political Theory: Assessing the Relevance of Ideal theory, Manchester (paper).

- (with Ross Mittiga) “Material Scarcity and Justice”—Western Political Science Association, Vancouver (paper).
 “The Aesthetic Value of Eating Local Food”—American Philosophical Association Eastern Division, Baltimore (colloquium).
 2016 “Plato’s Theory of Punishment in *The Laws*”—American Philosophical Association Pacific Division, San Francisco (colloquium).

Invited Presentations

- 2018 “Nonideal Justice, Fairness and Affirmative Action.”—Workshop in Political Theory, Stanford University (paper).
 2017 “An Ideological Critique of Nonideal Methodology.”—P.P.L. Colloquium, University of Virginia (colloquium).
 “Why Should Bioethicists be Self-Conscious about Methodology?”—Symposium on John Arras’s *Methods in Bioethics: The Way We Reason Now*, University of Virginia (paper).
 2016 “Nonideal Justice, Fairness, and Affirmative Action”—University of Virginia, (colloquium).
 2014 (with Andrew Morgan) “Philosophy, Threat and Climate Change”—Mellon Interdisciplinary Workshop, Trinity College Dublin (workshop).

Comments

- 2016 On Tom Beauchamp’s, “The Future of Bioethics: Methods, Principles, Practices,”—Conference on The Public Life of Ethics, University of Virginia.
 On Elizabeth Barnes’s, “The Value-Neutral Model,”—P.P.L. Colloquium, University of Virginia.
 2015 On Colleen Murphy’s, “The Conceptual Foundations of Transitional Justice”—P.P.L. Conference, University of Virginia.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

- 2018 Edgar F. Shannon award for the most outstanding graduating student in the University of Virginia Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
 2017 University of Virginia Dean’s Dissertation Completion Fellowship.
 University of Virginia Travel Stipend (also awarded 2016, and 2014).
 2016 University of Virginia Society of Fellows Reuben Clark Dissertation Fellowship.
 University of Virginia Society of Fellows Summer Research Grant.
 2015 Elected Junior Fellow of the University of Virginia Society of Fellows.
 2013 University of Virginia GSAS Summer Language Fellowship (Ancient Greek).
 2009 Gold Medal, for outstanding undergraduate results, Trinity College Dublin.
 Luce Memorial Prize, for the highest marks on the final philosophy examination, Trinity College Dublin.
 2007 Elected Scholar of Trinity College Dublin.

ACADEMIC SERVICES

- 2018 Organized a panel on “Ideal theory and Ideology” at the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Society, New Orleans.
Chair of symposium on Mihailis Diamantis’s “Corporate Essence and Identity in Criminal Law,” American Philosophical Association Central, Chicago.
- 2017 Organized a symposium to celebrate the publication of John Arras’s book, *Methods in Bioethics: The Way We Reason Now*.
- 2016 Organized a reading group on Gerald Gaus’s *The Tyranny of the Ideal*.
Organized a reading group on Tommie Shelby’s *We Who are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*.
- 2015 Organized a reading group on Derek Parfit’s *On What Matters*.
- 2014 Research assistant to John Arras.
- 2013 Founder and organizer of the UVa Ethics Discussion Group.
- 2010 Referee for Oxford Philosophy Graduate Conference.
- 2008 Chair University of Dublin Metaphysical Society.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Primary Instructor at the University of Virginia

- 2016 “Ethics and Technology.”
2015 “Punishment.”
“Philosophy of Food.”

Teaching Assistant at the University of Virginia

- 2014 “The Meaning of Life.” Instructor: Walter Ott.
“Philosophical Problems in Law.” Instructor: A. John Simmons.
- 2013 “Introduction to Philosophy.” Instructor: Jesse Newton.
“Philosophical Problems in Law.” Instructor: A. John Simmons.
- 2012 “Human Nature.” Instructor: Harold Langsam.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Philosophers who have written about justice have predominantly focused on ideal theory—a conception of how a perfectly just society should be structured. However, all actual societies are in nonideal conditions, failing to realize any (plausible) ideal theory of justice. Accordingly, we must consider what theory of justice applies in our actual nonideal world and how, if at all, this theory of justice relates to an ideal theory of justice.

My dissertation develops a new nonideal theory of justice and clarifies its relationship with ideal justice. This theory hinges on an innovation I term “nonideal principles of justice.” These principles—forged using a Rawlsian contractualist framework—constitute the transitional path for the realization of ideal justice. For example, a nonideal liberty principle specifies how to increase people’s ability to exercise their basic liberties. Ultimately, I argue that the principles are valuable—perhaps even essential—for tackling difficult exigent questions, such as how to

specify the conditions under which non-meritocratic affirmative action is just. Furthermore, they facilitate an “agent-guiding” function of justice: they direct people to adopt the right response to institutional realizations of justice, which are attuned to their epistemic limitations and make appropriate concessions to considerations of political feasibility.

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

University of Virginia (*=taken for credit)

- 2018 “Well-being and Health.” Instructor: Elizabeth Barnes.
2016 “Racial Justice and Law.” Instructor: Kim Forde-Mazrui, (Law School).
“Political Philosophy (Nonideal Theory).” Instructor: A. John Simmons.
2015 “Aristotle’s Politics.” Instructor: Daniel Devereux.
2014 “Contemporary Ethics.” Instructor: Rebecca Stangl.
“Probability, Induction and Decisions.” Instructor: Paul Humphreys.*
“Plato’s Late Political Philosophy.” Instructor: Dominic Scott.
“Contemporary Epistemology.” Instructor: Harold Langsam.
2013 “Contemporary Ethical Theory.” Instructor: Talbot Brewer.*
“The Duty to Obey the Law.” Instructor: A. John Simmons.*
“Causation in Early Modern Philosophy.” Instructor: Antonia LoLordo.*
“Possible World.” Instructor: Trenton Merricks.*
“Political Philosophy.” Instructor: A. John Simmons.
2012 “First Year Seminar (Plato’s Metaphysics).” Instructor: Daniel Devereux.*
“Rescue, Charity & Justice.” Instructor: A. John Simmons.*

Brown University

- 2017 “The Philosophy of G. A. Cohen.” Instructors: David Estlund & Charles Larmore.

University of Oxford (*=taken for credit)

- 2011 “Hegel.” Instructor: Michael Inwood.
2010 “Kant.” Instructor: Ralph Walker, (individual tutorial).*
“Wittgenstein’s Private Language Argument.” Instructor: William Child.
“On What Matters.” Instructor: Derek Parfit.
“Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Law.” Instructor: Leslie Green, (individual tutorial).*
“Hume.” Instructor: Peter Millican.
“Philosophy of Law and Political Philosophy.” Instructors: John Gardner and Leslie Green.
2009 “Metaphysics and Epistemology.” Instructor: John Hawthorne, (individual tutorial).*
“Philosophy of Law.” Instructor: John Gardner.
“Moral Philosophy.” Instructor: Roger Crisp.

REFERENCES

- A. John Simmons John Allen Hollingsworth Professor of Philosophy
University of Virginia, 120 Cocke Hall, Charlottesville, Va. 22904.
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- David Estlund Lombardo Family Professor of Philosophy
Brown University, 45 Prospect Street, Providence, RI. 02912.
David_Estlund@brown.edu, (+1) 401-863-3096
- Talbot Brewer Professor of Philosophy
University of Virginia, 120 Cocke Hall, Charlottesville, Va. 22904.
tbrewer@virginia.edu, (+1) 434-924-7869
- James F. Childress University Professor Emeritus
University of Virginia, 323 Gibson Hall, Charlottesville, Va 22903.
jfc7c@virginia.edu, (+1) 434-924-6724
- Colin Bird Associate Professor of Politics
University of Virginia, S183 Gibson Hall, Charlottesville, Va 22904.
cpb6f@virginia.edu, (+1) 434-924-3615
- Walter Ott
(Teaching) Professor of Philosophy
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(All of these references are on file at the University of Virginia Department of Philosophy.
Please email Mr Mark Jeter: philosophy@virginia.edu)