

# Merrick Anderson

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## EMPLOYMENT

Keeling Research Fellow  
University College London, Department of Philosophy 2019-

Postgraduate Research Associate and Lecturer  
Princeton University, Department of Philosophy 2018-2019

## EDUCATION

Princeton University  
Ph.D. in Philosophy 07.2018

University of Toronto  
M.A. in Political Theory 08.2012

University of Toronto  
B.A. in Philosophy; Graduated with High Distinction 06.2011

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Ancient Philosophy, Normative Ethics

## AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Metaethics, Nietzsche, Political Philosophy

## PAPERS

“What are the Wages of Justice? Rethinking Plato’s Division of Goods”  
(forthcoming in 2020). *Phronesis* [11939 words]

“*Legein* to What End?”  
(forthcoming in 2020). *Australasian Philosophical Review* [3969 words]

“Immortality or Immorality? An Argument for Virtue”  
*Rhetorica* 37.2: 97-119 (2019)

“Thrasymachus’ Sophistic Account of Justice in *Republic* i”  
*Ancient Philosophy* 36.1: 151-72 (2016)

**BOOK REVIEWS**

“Review of Dixsaut, *Plato-Nietzsche: Philosophy the Other Way*  
*Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2018)

**BOOK IN PROGRESS**

*Just Prospering? An Ancient Debate about the Nature and Value of Justice*

**AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

At Princeton University

Mildred W. and Alfred T. Carton, Class of 1905 Fellowship <i>Competitive named fellowship for outstanding research</i>	2017-18
Laurance S. Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship <i>For promising interdisciplinary work on human values</i>	2016-17
University Center for Human Values Travel Grant	2014-17
Paul Elmer More Fellowship	2013-18
Stanley J. Seeger Graduate Fellowship	2013-18
Stanley J. Seeger Summer Fellowship	2013-17, 2019

At University of Toronto

Hertog Political Studies Program Fellowship	2012
Socrates Project Fellowship	2010-11
Registrars Graduation Award in the Humanities <i>For having the highest GPA of my graduating class</i>	2007-11

**TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS**

The Structure and Anatomy of the Platonic Virtues <i>Institute for Classical Studies, London</i>	10.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i> <i>Philosophy Department, University College London</i>	06.2019
The Moral Philosophy of the Anonymous Iamblich and its Influence <i>Department of Classics, Durham University</i>	06.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i> <i>Pennsylvania Circle of Ancient Philosophy, Villanova University</i>	04.2019
The Ethics of Comedy and Offense <i>Human Values Forum, Princeton University</i>	03.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i> <i>Philosophy Department, Brown University</i>	01.2019
Comments on Chiara Capelletto’s “On Sympathy, or how to Escape Empathy” <i>Workshop of the Postclassicisms Initiative, Mumbai</i>	07.2018
Comments on Mikhail Silian’s “Shapes as Objects of Mathematics in Ptolemy” <i>6th LMU-HU Joint Graduate Workshop, Berlin</i>	04.2018
How Does Justice Pay? An Analysis of Plato’s <i>Republic</i>	

<i>Classical Philosophy Works in Progress Seminar, Princeton University</i>	10.2017
Democritus on Eudaimonia	
<i>5<sup>th</sup> Biannual International Association of Presocratic Studies, Austin</i>	06.2016
Immortality or Immortality? An Argument for Virtue	
<i>Princeton Philosophical Society, Princeton University</i>	10.2015
Comments on Mi-Kyoung Lee's "The Sophists on Greek Morality"	
<i>Toronto Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, University of Toronto</i>	03.2015
The Sophistic Socrates in the <i>Euthydemus</i>	
<i>Cambridge University Graduate Conference, Cambridge University</i>	03.2014

## TEACHING

At University College London – Instructor	
PHIL0001: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy	Fall.2019
At Princeton University – Instructor	
PHI/CLA205: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy	Fall.2018
At Princeton University – Assistant Instructor	
PHI385: Practical Ethics	Fall.2017
PHI300: Plato and his Predecessors	Spring.2016
PHI306: Nietzsche	Fall.2014
At University of Toronto – Teaching Assistant	
PHL385: Ethics and Mental Health	Spring.2013
PHL105: Introduction to Philosophy	pring.2012
PHL271: Law and Morality	Fall.2011
PHL100: Introduction to Philosophy	AY.2010-11

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

*Justice and Prospering: Ancient Debates, Disagreements and Dilemmas*

My dissertation is about justice and the nature of its value. In what way is justice valuable? Is it absolutely valuable, such that its very existence makes the world a better place? Or is it only valuable as a means to living a satisfying and happy life? Perhaps neither of these categories capture the value it possesses or, then again, perhaps cynics are correct to suggest that real virtue has no value and only the appearance of virtue does us any good. These questions preoccupied the ancient Greeks and they were the first to engage in a theoretical debate about the nature of justice's value. In my dissertation, I offer an historically informed interpretation of several important works to show that the earliest philosophers had diverse, sophisticated and relevant insights into the nature of justice's value.

The culminating chapters present a new interpretation of Plato's *Republic*. Engaging with a thorny scholarly debate about the division of goods in Book II, I argue against the now-standard interpretation that Plato understands justice to be

an intrinsic good, valuable totally independently of its effects. I show instead that, according to Plato, justice is valuable in virtue of the fact that it contributes to human happiness through its unique *dunamis* – its power or capacity – which has specific effects on the just agent’s soul. The idea that justice has a unique power or capacity, the effects of which contribute to our happiness in specific and determinate ways, was an important innovation in moral philosophy at the time the *Republic* was written. Moreover, the account of justice’s value that Plato develops in this seminal text remains compelling and philosophically profound.

The beginning chapters of the dissertation set the stage for my analysis of the *Republic* by surveying an earlier debate regarding justice. I begin 300 years before the time of Plato with what I call the Traditional View of Justice as articulated by the didactic poet Hesiod. I then show that a group of sophists sought to undermine the Traditional View by arguing that justice does not truly exist and, to the extent that it does, it does not serve the happiness of the intelligent agent. Finally, I show that yet another group of sophists responded to the first group and argued that the life of justice was in fact the best and happiest life. Not only are the arguments of the second group of sophists interesting, but Plato incorporates insights from them into his own defense of justice in the *Republic*. For this reason, understanding the earlier debate is important for fully appreciating Plato’s philosophy.

## REFERENCES

### Research

Hendrik Lorenz (Primary Supervisor), Professor of Philosophy  
Princeton University, Philosophy  
+1 (609) 258 4300, [hlorenz@princeton.edu](mailto:hlorenz@princeton.edu)

Alexander Nehamas, Class of 1943 Professor in Humanities  
Princeton University, Philosophy  
+1 (609) 258 4309, [nehamas@princeton.edu](mailto:nehamas@princeton.edu)

Melissa Lane, Class of 1943 Professor of Politics and Director of the UCHV  
Princeton University, Politics  
+1 (609) 258 4860, [m lane@princeton.edu](mailto:m lane@princeton.edu)

John Cooper, Henry Putnam Professor of Philosophy  
Princeton University, Philosophy (Emeritus)  
+1 (609) 258 4297, [johncoop@princeton.edu](mailto:johncoop@princeton.edu)

Rachel Barney (External), Professor of Philosophy and Director of CPAMP  
University of Toronto, Philosophy  
+1 (416) 978 8513, [rachel.barney@utoronto.ca](mailto:rachel.barney@utoronto.ca)

Teaching

Benjamin Morison, Professor of Philosophy and Director Program in Classical Philosophy  
Princeton University, Philosophy  
+1 (609) 258 4304, [bmorison@princeton.edu](mailto:bmorison@princeton.edu)

Service

David Stirk, Dean of Butler College  
Princeton University, Butler College  
+1 (609) 258 4954, [dstirk@princeton.edu](mailto:dstirk@princeton.edu)

**RESEARCH LANGUAGES**

Ancient Greek, Latin, German, French (beginner)

**OTHER SERVICE**

At Princeton University

Senior Thesis supervision for Simeon Lane and Elizabeth Jobson	2018-19
Conference Moderator	2017, 2019
Resident Graduate Student, Butler College	2014-18

At University of Toronto

Volunteer Instructor for <i>Humanities for Humanity</i>	2010-11
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