

ROSS COLEBROOK

135 Clarkson Ave, Apt. D2
Brooklyn, NY 11226 USA
(208) 899-2653
colebrook.ross@gmail.com
www.rosscolebrook.weebly.com

EDUCATION

2018 PhD, Philosophy
Graduate Center, City University of New York

2011 MA, Philosophy
Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

2009 BA, Philosophy and Political Science
American University, Washington, DC

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Ethics, Moral Psychology

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

American Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Science

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Committee: Jesse Prinz (advisor), Hagop Sarkissian, Catherine Wilson.

Toward a Science of Morals

Morality is not merely a social construction or a convenient fiction. Nor is it supernatural or non-natural. Rather, right and wrong can be determined from a scientific perspective that makes sense of our moral judgments, vindicates the objectivity of those judgments, and opens the door for their rational systematization. Contrary to the claims of many philosophers and psychologists, this realist metaethical perspective is not simply embedded in common sense. Without philosophical indoctrination, common sense is a hodgepodge of objectivist and subjectivist intuitions. Nevertheless, conceiving of morality in a realist way does matter, because experimental evidence indicates that having realist attitudes toward your moral beliefs makes you more likely to act in accordance with them. We can secure the objectivity of morality by understanding moral facts (like “murder is wrong”) from a Quinean perspective that is metaphysically (but not semantically) reductionist and realist. Furthermore, some moral facts are not only objective; they are culturally universal. Empirical evidence supports the claim that foundational moral content (the meaning of

a moral judgment) is fixed by innately specified cognitive modules. In some cases, this innate restriction on the scope of foundational content produces culturally relative moral judgments, and these judgments only track non-naturalizable or subjective moral properties—purity, authority, and loyalty. In other cases, this restriction on the scope of foundational content produces culturally universal moral judgments that track plausibly naturalizable and objective moral properties—harm and fairness. The former concepts cause fundamental, irresolvable moral disagreements, and are ultimately illusory. The latter concepts define the foundations and limits of legitimate first-order moral debate.

PUBLICATIONS

Colebrook, R. (2020). The Irrationality of Folk Metaethics. *Philosophical Psychology*. Conditionally accepted, subject to minor revisions (11/8/2019).

Colebrook R., Sarkissian H. (2018) Objectivity. In: Shackelford T., Weekes-Shackelford V. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16999-6_534-1

Colebrook, R. (2016). Review: Sophie Grace Chappell (Ed.). Intuition, Theory, and Anti-Theory in Ethics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 240 pages; \$66.00/hardcover. *The Philosophical Forum*, 47(1), 47–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phil.12096>

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Does Moral Realism Matter?

Under review.

The Heroes and Villains of Evolutionary History

Draft available.

On the Subject of Changing the Subject

Draft available.

The Theory of Moral Twin Earthlings

Draft available.

The Empirical Foundations of Universal Morality

Draft available.

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

What's a Moral Issue, Anyway? Investigating Folk Categorization of Moral Issues. Working Papers in Ethics and Moral Psychology, Mt. Sinai Bioethics Program, Fall 2019.

Does it Matter Whether Morality is Objective?

Kent State University Graduate Conference, Spring 2017.

Does it Matter Whether Morality is Objective?

Poster Presentation, Society for Philosophy and Psychology Annual Meeting, University of Texas, Spring 2016.

On the Subject of Changing the Subject

University of Connecticut Graduate Conference in Philosophy, Spring 2016.

The Heroes and Villains of Evolutionary History

Main Program of the APA Eastern Division, Spring 2016.

The Changing the Subject Objection

Arizona State University Graduate Conference in Philosophy, Spring 2016.

Commentary on Stephanie Leary's "Non-Naturalism and Normative Necessities"

Speculative Ethics Forum at St. Johns University, Fall 2015.

Ethical Reductionism and the Darwinian Dilemma

Nature and Norms Graduate Conference at Johns Hopkins University, Fall 2015.

A Smaller Self: Two Criticisms of Real Self Theories

Columbia-NYU Graduate Conference in Philosophy, Fall 2013.

Moral Societies are Sometimes Icky: A Social Intuitionist Framework for Pluralism

Glasscock Humanities Center, Texas A&M University, Spring 2010.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

At New York University

As Preceptor (responsible for lecturing and grading—two sections).

Fall 2019 Two sections of CORE-UA 400: Texts and Ideas.

At Baruch College (CUNY)

As Adjunct Assistant Professor (responsible for curriculum, lecturing, and grading—three sections).

Winter 2019 One section of PHI 1100: Ethics and Critical Thinking.

Fall 2019 Three sections of PHI 1100: Ethics and Critical Thinking.

As Teaching Assistant (responsible for guest lecturing and grading—two sections).

Fall 2016 One section of PHIL 1700: Global Ethics.

Fall 2015 One section of PHIL 1700: Ethical Theories.

At St. Francis College, Brooklyn

As Adjunct Instructor (responsible for curriculum, lecturing, and grading—two sections).

Spring 2019 One section of PHI 1114: Logic and Argumentation.

Spring 2019 One section of PHI 2310: American Philosophy.

At Barnard College

As Grader (responsible for grading—three sections)

Fall 2018 – Fall 2019 Three sections of PHIL UN1001: Introduction to Philosophy

At Medgar Evers College (CUNY)

As Adjunct Assistant Professor (responsible for curriculum, lecturing, and grading—sixteen sections).

Fall 2018 – Spring 2019 Six sections of PHIL 101: Introduction to Logic.

Fall 2017 – Spring 2018 Six sections of PHIL 101: Introduction to Logic.

Fall 2016 – Spring 2017 Three sections of PHIL 101: Introduction to Logic.

Spring 2016 One section of PHIL 201: Ethics and Social Philosophy.

At Hunter College (CUNY)

As Adjunct Lecturer (responsible for curriculum, lecturing, and grading—three sections).

Summer 2017 One section of PHIL 104: Introduction to Ethics.

Spring 2017 One section of PHIL 104: Introduction to Ethics.

Fall 2016 One section of PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy.

At Brooklyn College (CUNY)

As Writing Across the Curriculum Fellow (responsible for curriculum development).

Fall 2015 – Spring 2016 Organized workshops to train faculty on writing-intensive teaching and knowledge transfer.

As Graduate Teaching Fellow (responsible for curriculum, lecturing, and grading—fifteen sections).

Spring 2015 Two sections of PHIL 2101: Introduction to Philosophy.

Fall 2014 Two sections of PHIL 3314: Moral Issues in Business.

Spring 2014 Two sections of PHIL 2101: Introduction to Philosophy.

Fall 2013 – Spring 2014 Four sections of PHIL 3314: Moral Issues in Business.

Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 Five sections of CORC 1210: Knowledge, Reality, and Values.

At City College of New York (CUNY)

As Teaching Assistant (responsible for guest lecturing and grading—two sections).

2011-2012 Two sections of PHIL 102: Introduction to Philosophy.

At Texas A&M University

As Teaching Assistant (responsible for guest lecturing and grading—two sections).

Spring 2011 One section of PHIL 251: Introduction to Philosophy.

Fall 2010 One section of PHIL 205: Technology and Human Values.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2015-2016 **Writing Across the Curriculum Fellow**

Brooklyn College (\$20,000)

2015 APA Graduate Student Travel Stipend

APA Eastern (\$300)

2014 Provost Summer Research Grant

Graduate Center, City University of New York (\$4000)

2011-2014 Enhanced Chancellor's Fellowship

Graduate Center, City University of New York (\$90,000 plus tuition)

2009 Graduate Student Essay Prize

Texas A&M University (\$500)

2009 Graduate Student Merit Fellowship

Texas A&M University (\$25,000)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

2019 Reviewed *Concise Guide to Critical Thinking* by Lewis Vaughn for Oxford University Press.

2019 Refereed a paper for the American Philosophical Quarterly.

2016-2017 Refereed papers for the Australasian Journal of Philosophy (2x).

2015-2016 Organized and ran three Writing Across the Curriculum workshops on knowledge transfer, student engagement, scaffolding, and low stakes writing for faculty at Brooklyn College and PS189K in Brownsville, Brooklyn.

2015 Research Assistant for Professor John Greenwood (CUNY Graduate Center).

2013 Research Assistant for Professor Alberto Cordero (CUNY Graduate Center).

2011 Served as the Graduate Center's colloquium reception coordinator.

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

At the Graduate Center, City University of New York:

2013 Moral Epistemology and the Self (Sharon Street, NYU), Mental Qualities (David Rosenthal), Quine & Sellars (David Rosenthal).

2012 Scientific Representation (Arnold Koslow), Morality and the Self (Jesse Prinz), British Empiricism (Don Garrett, NYU), Philosophy of Mind (Jesse Prinz).

2011 British Moralists (Stephen Baumrin), Reference and Experimental Philosophy (Michael Devitt), Proseminar (Stephen Neale & Jesse Prinz).

At Texas A&M University

2011 Philosophy of Science (Roger Sansom), Metaethics (Linda Radzik).

2010 American Philosophy (Gregory Pappas), Self-Knowledge (Benjamin McMyler), Kant's Third Critique (Kristi Sweet), Mathematical Logic (Christopher Menzel).

2009 Animal Ethics (Gary Varner), Fatalism and Determinism in Ancient Greek Philosophy (Robin Smith), John Dewey (John McDermott).

REFERENCES

Jesse Prinz (Advisor)

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, CUNY Graduate Center

JESSE@SUBCORTEX.COM

Catherine Wilson

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of York & CUNY Graduate Center

CATHERINE.WILSON@YORK.AC.UK

Hagop Sarkissian

Associate Professor of Philosophy, Baruch College & CUNY Graduate Center

HSARKISSIAN@BARUCH.CUNY.EDU

Justin Garson (Teaching Reference)

Associate Professor of Philosophy, Hunter College

JGARSON@HUNTER.CUNY.EDU

Nelson Carrillo

Senior Academic Advisor, Office of Services for the Differently-Abled

Medgar Evers College, CUNY

NCARRILLO@MEC.CUNY.EDU