

Brian T. Wilson
Curriculum Vitae

Department of Philosophy
University of Minnesota
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Areas of Specialization

Normative Ethics, Applied Ethics, Human Rights

Areas of Competence

Moral Psychology, Metaethics, Mathematics

Education

- 2016 Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Minnesota
 Dissertation: "Modeling Obligation"
 Advisers: Sarah Holtman and Roy T. Cook
 Minor: Human Rights
 Adviser: Barb Frey
- 2011 M.A., Philosophy, University of Minnesota
- 2008 B.S., Double major: Philosophy, Mathematics
 Tufts University, *Cum Laude*

Dissertation Abstract

I argue that morality, like the sciences and mathematics, models a certain aspect of the world. My dissertation focuses on a model of obligations. First, I argue that "ought" does not imply "can". I provide a number of counterexamples to show that we sometimes have obligations that we cannot act on. Second, I develop an account of obligation without the presumption of ability. The account shows that each person has certain obligations that she cannot act on. These are perfect, universal and general obligations (PUGOs). Finally, in light of the impossible obligations, I present a metric for moral judgment that is based, not on an agent's actual actions, but on her disposition to act on obligations. The account shows that practical wisdom plays a large part in our ability to act with a moral disposition.

Research

- Summer 2014 "Food Accessibility in Tapacari, Bolivia: The Construction of Individual Family Greenhouses"
 Cochabamba, Bolivia
 Global Spotlight Doctoral Dissertation Research Award
 http://global.umn.edu/spotlight/grants/grants_2014.html#doctoral-tab

Conducted a research project on the effect of individual family greenhouse construction in an extremely food inaccessible rural Andean village (Jironkota)

Summer 2012

Upper Midwest Human Rights Fellowship
University of Minnesota, Law School
Quezon City, The Philippines
In collaboration with *The Center for Migrant Advocacy*; research conducted on the treatment of Overseas Filipino Workers

Spring 2010 –
Fall 2011

Co-Investigator
Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota
Created and ran an experiment on the development of moral judgment in children, in order to investigate whether a baseline exists for moral judgments
Adviser: Melissa Koenig

Publications Under Review

Divorcing “Ought” from “Can”

Awards and Honors

Spring 2015

Global Food Security Fellowship, Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change, University of Minnesota

Fall 2013 –
Spring 2014

Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship; University of Minnesota
Title: “Divorcing Ability and Obligation”

Summer 2013

Tom Lopic Fellowship for Philosophy and Social Justice;
University of Minnesota
Title: “The Disposition to Act”

Summer 2012

Graduate Research Partnership Program; University of Minnesota
Title: “On Ought implies Can”

Summer 2010

Department Research Partnership Program Award; University of Minnesota

2007-08

Jerome T. Loeb Scholarship; Tufts University

Presentations

February 13th, 2015

“Food Accessibility and the Construction of Greenhouses in Bolivia”, Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change, University of Minnesota

October 4th, 2014

“Sentiment in Morality and Mathematics”
Minnesota Philosophical Society Conference, UM- Duluth

September 12 th , 2014	Discussant: Michael Fuerstein “Democratic Experiments” Moral, Political, Legal and Social Theory Workshop
December 12 th , 2013	“The Disposition to Act,” University of Minnesota Tom Lopic Fellowship for Philosophy and Social Justice
November 13 th , 2012	“On ‘Ought’ implies ‘Can’,” University of Minnesota Graduate Research Partnership Program
April 27 th , 2011	“The Priority of Basic Rights,” University of Minnesota Department Research Partnership Program
April 13 th , 2011	“Lethal vs. non-lethal effects of Tasers,” Colloquium on Strategic efforts to prevent cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in the U.S., University of Minnesota
April 2010	“A History of the Stalnaker-Lewis Comparative Similarity Relation,” University of Minnesota Department of Philosophy Department Research Partnership Program Presentation
May 23-25, 2014	Second Annual Workshop on Food Justice and Peace: Bringing Theory and Practice Together, Michigan State University [†]
July 21-24, 2014	10 th International Conference of the International Development Ethics Association, San Jose, Costa Rica [†]

Teaching

Full Course Instructor

Introduction to Ethics	University of Minnesota: F11, S13 Minnesota State University – Mankato (online): S12, S13, S14
Philosophy and Cultural Diversity	University of Minnesota: F12, SU15
Logic	Normandale Community College: F14 University Of Minnesota, Distance Learning Course: F13, S14
Applied Calculus	University of St. Thomas: F12
Finite Mathematics	University of St. Thomas: S13

[†] Accepted but not presented

Teaching Assistantship University of Minnesota
Logic: S12, F14
Moral Problems: S11
Ancient Philosophy: F09
Political Philosophy: S09

Activities

Fall 2010 – John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* Reading Group
Fall 2011 Coordinated under the supervision of Sarah Holtman

Fall 2009 – Development of Moral Judgment Psychology Group
Spring 2010 Organized by Melissa Koenig and Michael Maratsos

Service

2013 – 2014 Staffing and Awards Committee; Department of Philosophy,
University of Minnesota

2010 – 2011 Hospice Volunteer; Aseracare Hospice, Bloomington, MN

2010 Department Council Representative; Department of Philosophy,
University of Minnesota

References

Roy T. Cook (Doctorate co-adviser)
Professor of Philosophy (Mathematics and Logic), University of Minnesota
Phone: 612-625-8379
Email: cookx432@umn.edu

Sarah Holtman (Doctorate co-adviser)
Professor of Philosophy (Ethics), University of Minnesota
Phone: 612-626-1764
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Douglas Lewis
Professor of Philosophy, University of Minnesota
Phone: 612-625-6563
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Barbara Frey
Human Rights Program Director
Institute for Global Studies, University of Minnesota
Phone: 612-624-9007
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