

DAVID SOBEL

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Pronouns: he, him

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Michigan, 1997

B.A., Philosophy (with High Honors), Swarthmore College, 1987

EMPLOYMENT

Syracuse University, *Irwin and Marjorie Gutttag Professor of Ethics and Political Philosophy* (2013-)

University of Nebraska, *Robert R. Chambers Professor of Philosophy* (2007-2013)

Bowling Green State University Chair (2003-2007)
Associate Professor (2002-2007)
Assistant Professor (1996-2002)
Instructor (1995-1996)

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Visiting Fellow, Freedom Center, University of Arizona (2025).

Visiting Fellow, Centre for Advanced Study, Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, Oslo, Norway (May 2024)

Lawrence S. Rockefeller Visiting Fellow, *University Center for Human Values*, Princeton University (2020-2021)

Finalist, Laura J. & L. Douglas Meredith Professorship, Syracuse University's highest honor for teaching excellence (2018). (One of two candidates put forward by the College of Arts & Sciences and one of eight finalists University-wide.)

Visiting Fellow, Australian National University (June-August 2017)

Senior Zukunftskolleg Fellowship, University of Konstanz, Germany (June-August 2014)

Visiting Fellow, All Souls College, University of Oxford, England (April-July 2009)

Visiting Fellow, Philosophy Department, University of Leiden, Netherlands (January-April, 2009)

Visiting Fellow, *Centre for Ethics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs*, University of St. Andrews, Scotland (September-December 2008)

Senior Research Fellow, *Social Philosophy and Policy Center* (2002-2007)

Visiting Fellow, Australian National University, The Philosophy Program, Research School of Social Sciences (January-August 2003)

Taft Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Cincinnati (2000-2001)

Brand Blanchard Essay Prize (best submitted philosophical essay of the year), Swarthmore College (1987)

PUBLICATIONS

Books

From Valuing to Value: A Defense of Subjectivism, Oxford University Press, 2016. Paperback 2019.

Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy, volumes 1-10 (2013-2023), Co-editor.

Reasons for Action, Cambridge University Press, 2009, Co-edited.

Articles

1. "Full Information Accounts of Well-Being" *Ethics* 104 (1994): 784-810.
2. "On the Subjectivity of Welfare" *Ethics* 107 (1997): 501-8.
3. "Well-Being as the Object of Moral Consideration" *Economics and Philosophy* 14 (1998): 249-81.
4. "Pleasure as a Mental State" *Utilitas* Vol. 11 (1999): 230-35.
5. "Do the Desires of Rational Agents Converge?" *Analysis* 59 (1999): 137-47.
6. "Against Direction of Fit Accounts of Belief and Desire" (with David Copp), *Analysis* 61 (2001): 44-53.
7. "Subjective Accounts of Reasons for Action" *Ethics* 111 (2001): 461-92.
8. "Explanation, Internalism, and Reasons for Action" *Social Philosophy & Policy* 18 (2001): 218-35. (Reprinted in *Moral Epistemology*, Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr., and Jeffrey Paul (eds.), Cambridge University Press (2001).
9. "Varieties of Hedonism" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33 (2002): 240-256.
10. "The Moral Importance of the Capability to Achieve Elementary Functionings," in *Eudaimonia and Well-Being: Ancient and Modern Conceptions*, (ed.) Lawrence Jost and Roger Shiner, *Apeiron*, Vol. XXXV (2002): 163-82.
11. "Desires, Motives, and Reasons: Scanlon's Rationalistic Moral Psychology" (with David Copp) *Social Theory and Practice* 28 (2002): 243-76. (Reply from T. M. Scanlon in the same volume.)
12. "Reply to Robertson," *Philosophical Papers* 32 (2003): 185-91.
13. "Morality and Virtue" (with David Copp), *Ethics* 114 (2004): 514-54. (Portions reprinted in *You Decide!: Current Debates in Ethics*, Bruce Waller (ed.), Pearson/A.B. Longman, 2006.
14. "Pain for Objectivists: The Case of Matters of Mere Taste," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 8 (2005): 437-57.
15. "[Instrumental Rationality: Not Dead Yet](#)," *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* (2005).

16. "Practical Reasons and Mistakes of Practical Rationality," *Moral Psychology*, Sergio Tenenbaum (ed.), Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and Humanities, Rodopi, 2007, 299-321.
17. "[The Impotence of the Demandingness Objection](#)," *Philosophers' Imprint* (2007).
18. "Introduction" (with Steven Wall), in *Reasons for Action*, David Sobel and Steven Wall (eds.), Cambridge University Press, 2009, 1-13.
19. "Subjectivism and Idealization," *Ethics* 119 (2009): 336-52.
20. "Subjectivism and Blame," in *Reasons to be Moral Revisited*, Sam Black and Evan Tiffany (eds.), *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplementary Volume 33 (2009): 149-170.
21. "The Limits of the Explanatory Power of Developmentalism," *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 7 (2010), 517-27.
22. "Parfit's Case Against Subjectivism," *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, Vol. 6 (2011): 52-78.
23. "Backing Away from Libertarian Self-Ownership," *Ethics* 123 (2012): 32-60.
24. "Self-Ownership and the Conflation Problem," *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics*, Vol. 3 (2013): 98-122.
25. "Disagreeing about How to Disagree" (with Kate Manne), *Philosophical Studies* 168 (2014): 823-834.
26. "Is Subjectivism Incoherent?," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 92 (2016): 531-8.
27. "Introduction," in Sobel, *From Valuing to Value*.
28. "Subjectivism and Reasons to be Moral," in Sobel, *From Valuing to Value*.
29. "Subjectivism and Proportionalism," in Sobel, *From Valuing to Value*. (Updated version of a [review](#) of Mark Schroeder's *Slaves of the Passions*, Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews (2009).
30. "Introduction," *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy*, Vol. 3 (2017).
31. "Advice for Non-Analytical Naturalists" (with Janice Dowell), *Reading Parfit: On What Matters*, Routledge, Simon Kirchen (ed.), (2017). (Reply from Derek Parfit in the same volume.)
32. "[The Ethics of Eating Meat](#)," *Philosophic Exchange* (2017).
33. "The Point of Self-Ownership," in *The Oxford Handbook on Freedom*, David Schmidtz and Carmen Pavel (eds.), Oxford University Press, 2018, 124-140.
34. "[The Case for Stance-Dependent Reasons](#)," *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 15, (2019).
35. "Understanding the Demandingness Objection," in *The Oxford Handbook of Consequentialism*, Doug Portmore's (ed.), Oxford University Press, 2020.
36. "Why Subjectivism?" in *Practical Reason*, Ruth Chang and Kurt Sylvan (eds.), Routledge (2021).
37. "A Robust Hybrid Theory of Well-Being" (with Steven Wall), *Philosophical Studies* 178 (2021): 2829–2851.

38. "The Objectivist Attempt to Appropriate Subjective Value" (with Steven Wall), *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, Vol. 18 (2023): 1-23.
39. "Hybrid Goods" (with Steven Wall), *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics*, Vol. 14 (2024): 117-137.
40. "The Subjective/Objective Distinction in Well-Being" (with Steven Wall), *Ethics* 135 (2025): 519-44. A [PEA Soup "Ethics Discussion,"](#) piece on this article with a preface by Chris Heathwood

Shorter Works and Book Reviews

"Humean Theories of Motivation," *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Hugh LaFollette (ed.).

Review of T. M. Scanlon's *What We Owe to Each Other* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), *Economics and Philosophy* 16 (2000): 368-72. Co-authored with David Copp.

Review of Ruth Chang's (ed.) *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reason* (Harvard University Press, 1997), *Philosophical Quarterly* 49 (1999): 545-48.

Review of Michael Zimmerman's *The Concept of Moral Obligation* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), *Ethics* 109 (1999): 468-70.

"Sumner on Welfare" (Critical Notice of L. W. Sumner's *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, Clarendon Press, 1996), *Dialogue*, Vol. XXXVII (1998): 571-77.

Review of David Copp's *Morality, Normativity, and Society* (Oxford University Press, 1995) *Economics and Philosophy* 14 (1998): 349-57.

Review of James Griffin's *Value Judgment* (Clarendon Press, 1996), *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1 (1998): 479-80.

"Reply to Hubin" Brown Electronic Article Review Service (BEARS), Posted November 6, 2000, <http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Philosophy/bears/0011sobe.html>.

"Comment on Anderson" Brown Electronic Article Review Service (BEARS), Posted April 8, 1999, <http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Philosophy/bears/9904sobe.html>.

"Reply to Shaver" Brown Electronic Article Review Service (BEARS), Posted July 7, 1997, <http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Philosophy/bears/9707sobel.html>.

Work in Progress

Books

Value and Attitudes (with Steven Wall)

Articles

"Enjoying the Good and The Ineliminable Role of Arbitrariness" (with Steven Wall)

PRESENTATIONS

“Enjoying the Good and The Ineliminable Role of Arbitrariness,” (with Steven Wall).

Axiology Workshop at McGill University (2023)
Center for Advanced Study, Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters (2024)
Philadelphia Normative Philosophy Conference (2024)
Franklin & Marshall College (2024)
Kansas Workshop On Well-Being (2025)
University of Massachusetts, Amherst (2024)

Comments on Sharon Street’s “*On Recognizing Oneself in Others*,” Cornell Workshop on Mind and Value III - The Self in the Space of Reasons, 2024.

“The Objective/Subjective Distinction in Well-Being” (with Steven Wall)

SUNY, Albany (2023)
Shafer-Landau’s graduate course at The University of Wisconsin, Madison (2023)
New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics (2023) (Dale Dorsey, commentator)
Minnesota Workshop on Welfare (2023) (Jennifer Hawkins, commentator)
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (2023)
University of Maryland, College Park (2024)
Cornell University (2024)
Royal Ethics Conference, University of Texas at Austin (2024)
Center for Advanced Study, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters (2024)

“Cracking Wiser,” comments on David Shoemaker’s “Cracks and Quarrels,” New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics (2024).

“Hybrid Goods” (with Steven Wall), *Arizona Workshop in Normative Ethics*, Tucson, AZ (2023)

“The Objectivist’s Attempt to Appropriate Subjective Value” (with Steven Wall)

Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin (2021)
Virtual Metaethics Colloquium (2021)
University of Tromso, Norway, via Zoom (2021)

Comments on Leif Wenar’s “The Value of Unity,” online mini-conference on that work (2021)

“When Should we Defer to Those We are Trying to Help?” comments, Princeton University Rockefeller Fellows Seminar (2021)

“Preferences and Value Fulfillment,” comments, Pacific Division APA (2021)

“Can we Live Without Harm?” comments, Central Division APA (2021).

“A Robust Hybrid Theory of Well-Being” (with Steven Wall).

Kansas Workshop on Welfare, University of Kansas (2018)
New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics, Tulane University (2019),

Keynote, Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder (2019)
Ethics Discussion Group, University of Michigan (2019)
Rice University (2020)
Washington University, online Summer Series in Ethics (aka: Cogito, Ergo, Zoom) (2020)
Princeton University (2020)
Shafer-Landau's graduate seminar, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2023)

"Reply to Lin," Kansas Workshop on Welfare, University of Kansas (2019)

"Replies to Heathwood," Kansas Workshop on Welfare, University of Kansas (2018)

"The Case for Stance Dependent Reasons"
Australian National University (2017)
Duke University (2017)
William and Mary (2017)
Tulane University (2018)

"The Ethics of Eating Meat," College at Brockport (2016).

"Subjectivism and Reasons to be Moral"
Rutgers University (2014)
University of Konstanz, Germany (2014)
LUISS, Italy (2014)
University of Pavia, Italy (2014)
Arizona State University,
University of North Carolina (2015 and 2016)
New York University (2015)
Cornell University (2015)
Vermont (2015)
New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics, Tulane University (2016)
Duke University (2016),
Keynote, Syracuse Graduate Conference (2016)
Bled, Slovenia (2016)

"Subjectivism vs. Kantian Rationalism," Central Division APA, Author Meets Critics session on
Julia Markovits's *Moral Reason* (2015)

"The Point of Self-Ownership," University of Arizona (2014)

"Advice for Non-Analytical Naturalists" (with Janice Dowell)
The Ohio State University (2012))
New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics, Tulane University (2013)

"Reply to Mack: Should we Back Away from Self-Ownership?" New Orleans Invitational Seminar
in Ethics, Tulane University (2013)

- “Disagreeing about How to Disagree” (with Kate Manne) symposium on David Enoch’s *Taking Morality Seriously*, Eastern Division APA (2012)
- “Subjectivism and Idealization Again,” comments on Valerie Tiberius, “Right in the Middle: Normativity and Idealized Subjective Theories of Well-Being,” Henle Conference on Happiness and Well-Being, St. Louis (March 2012)
- “Backing Away from Self-Ownership”
 Mini-conference on this paper, Freedom Center, University of Arizona (2012)
 (Jason Brennan, Dan Russell, and John Thrasher, commentators)
 Transitional Justice Group, Political Science Department, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2011)
 Ohio State Conference *Reason and Right*, Dubrovnik, Croatia (2011)
 ISUS XI *The Ethics of Economic Development* in Lucca, Italy (2011)
 Syracuse University (2012)
 University of Copenhagen (2012)
 Swarthmore College (2012)
 Vermont (2015)
 Monash University (2017)
- “Self-Ownership and the Conflation Problem”
Arizona Workshop in Normative Ethics (2012)
 New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics Tulane University (2012)
 University of Lund (2012)
 University of Stockholm (2012)
- “Is There a Conceptual Connection Between a Sense of Self-Worth and Autonomy? Comments on Rosati,” New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics, Tulane University (2011)
- “Portmore’s Complaint Against Anti-Rationalism,” New Orleans Invitational Seminar in Ethics, Tulane University (2010)
- “Parfit’s Case against Subjectivism”
 University of Oxford (2009)
 Conference: *Emotion, Evolution, and Metaethics*, Sydney, Australia (2009)
 Madison Metaethics Workshop (2009)
 University of Kansas (2009)
 Southern Methodist University (2010)
- “Is Proportionalism Optional for Humeans?” University of Amsterdam (2009)
- “The Limits of the Explanatory Power of Developmentalism,” *Richard Kraut and His Critics* Conference, Leiden University (2009)

“Subjectivism and Idealization”

SPAWN (Syracuse Philosophical Annual Workshop and Network) (2007)

(Commentator: Michael Smith)

Symposium: *Subjective Accounts of Reasons for Action*, Central Division APA, Chicago (2007)

(co-presenters Jamie Dreier and Peter Railton)

Stirling University (2008)

University of Leeds (2008)

University of St. Andrews (2008)

University of Birmingham (2009)

University of Leiden (2009)

University of Utrecht (2009)

“Reply to Ruth Chang,” presented at the University of Missouri-Columbia Workshop *Practical Reason*, April, 2006.

“The Impotence of the Demandingness Objection”

Conference: *Demandingness in Ethics & Philosophy*, Dundee University, Scotland (July 2006)

British Society for Ethical Theory, Southampton, England (July 2006)

International Society for Utilitarian Studies, Dartmouth College (August 2005)

“Subjectivism and Going Haywire,” Central Division APA, Chicago (April 2005)

“Reply to Raz,” Conference: *Practical Rationality*, University of Maryland (College Park) (April 2005)

“Pain for Objectivists”

Central Division APA, Chicago (April 2004)

British Society for Ethical Theory, Kent University, Canterbury, England (June 2004)

“Morality and Virtue”

Australian National University (2003)

University of Sydney (2003)

“Practical Reasons and Mistakes of Practical Rationality”

University of Pennsylvania Legal Theory Workshop (March 22, 2002)

Georgia State University (2002)

University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand (2003)

Australian National University (2003)

Macquarie University, Australia (2003)

Monash University, Australia (2003)

“Explanation, Internalism, and Reasons for Action”

Moral Epistemology conference, Social Philosophy and Policy Center, La Jolla, CA (2000)

University of Cincinnati (2001)

- Reason and Deliberation* Conference, Bowling Green State University's (2001)
 University of Kansas (2002)
- "Reply to Railton and Rosati," APA Central Division Symposium: *The Philosophical Legacy of Richard Brandt*, New Orleans, Louisiana (1999)
- "Subjective Accounts of Reasons for Action"
- Well-Being* Conference, Bowling Green State University (September 27, 1998)
 - Kenyon College (1999)
 - Bowling Green State University, Department of Economics (2000)
 - Swarthmore College (2000)
 - University of Cincinnati (2000)
 - Rice University (2002)
 - University of Arizona (2002)
- "Well-Being as the Object of Moral Consideration"
- Utilitarianism Reconsidered* Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana (1997)
 - Bowling Green State University (1997)
 - University of Michigan (1997)
 - North Carolina State University (1997)
 - University of New Mexico (1998)
 - University of Toronto (1998)
- Panel discussion member, Spontaneous Order and Government in Hayek's *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, Liberty Fund colloquium, Albuquerque, New Mexico (1998)
- "The Moral Importance of the Capability to Achieve Elementary Functionings," *Eudaimonia and Well-Being* Conference, University of Cincinnati (1996)
- "Decision Theory and Well-Being," Bowling Green State University, Department of Economics (1996)
- "Reply to Professor Horowitz," University of Michigan *Rational Choice* Colloquium (1994)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Co-founding Editor, *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy*
 Co-edited volumes 1-10, 2013-23.
 Co-organized annual conference, 2013-2023.
 Co-Administered the Marc Sanders Prize in Political Philosophy awarded to the best paper submitted by a young scholar working in political philosophy, until 2023.
- Co-editor, PEA-Soup (with David Shoemaker) (2013-2022)
- Ethics* Editorial Board (2017-)

External Reviewer, Binghamton University's Philosophy Program (2025).

Site Visitor for the APA Cite Visit Program (2016)

Co-Author (with Janice Dowell), two-part blog post ([here](#) and [here](#)), Sexual Harassment in Philosophy. Includes an outline of new proposals for confronting the problem, co-signed by over 140 philosophers.

Member, APA Central Division Program Committee (2014 meeting)

Philosophy Compass Ethics section co-editor (with Valerie Tiberius) (2007-2009)

Program Committee Member, Madison Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2005, 2006, 2008, 2011, and 2012)

Program Committee Member for the *Normative Ethics* workshop at the University of Arizona (2009, 2010)

External Honors examiner, Swarthmore College (2004, 2010)

Assessor for the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (2010)

External Evaluation, Oklahoma University Department of Philosophy Outcomes and Assessment Program (2002)

Guest editor, BEARS web colloquium on Elizabeth Anderson's "What is the Point of Equality?" <http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Philosophy/bears/symp-anderson.html>. Participants: Elizabeth Anderson, Richard Arneson, Thomas Christiano, David Sobel.

Referee: *Ethics*, *The Philosophical Review*, *Nous*, *The Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Mind*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophers Imprint*, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, *Economics and Philosophy*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Thought*, *Journal of Ethics*, *Social Theory and Practice*, *European Journal of Philosophy*, *Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology*, *Dialogue*, *Philosophical Papers*, *Philosophical Explorations*, Oxford University Press.