

Eliza Wells

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Department of Philosophy • University of Manitoba
447 University College • Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2, Canada

Areas of Specialization: Social and Political Philosophy • Moral Philosophy • Feminist Philosophy

Areas of Competence: Philosophy of Technology • Philosophy of Religion

Employment

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB 2025 -

Fellow-in-Residence, Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 2024 - 2025

Education

PhD in Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA 2024

Dissertation: “Just Doing My Job: Normative Dimensions of Social Roles”

Abstract: “What should I do?” Often, our answers make reference to our social roles: we ask what we should do as lawyers, citizens, or parents. But this confronts us with problems. Consider a would-be whistleblower, a wife challenging the gendered division of household labor, or the conflicted police officer Javert from *Les Misérables*. These agents feel there is a genuine conflict between the norms of their roles and moral considerations. Philosophical orthodoxy downplays social roles as a background feature of our moral lives: either their importance can be explained in moral terms, or they are mere conventions that can and often should be discarded. I argue that this yields phenomenologically and theoretically impoverished accounts of the normative world. Taking roles seriously prompts revision to orthodox views of role-occupants’ reasons for action, blameworthiness, and responsibility for structural injustice.

Committee: Sally Haslanger (chair), Kieran Setiya, and Tamar Schapiro

MA in Religious Studies, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 2019

BA in Philosophy *with Distinction*, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 2019

Interdisciplinary Honors in Ethics in Society

Thesis: “Care, Individuals, and Institutions.” *Advisor:* Barry Maguire

Research

“Social Roles and Exculpatory Ignorance.” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* *forthcoming*

“Mormonism, Feminism, and Relational Moral Agency,” in *Contemporary Philosophy and the Latter-day Saint Tradition*, Taylor-Grey Miller and Katarina Paxman (eds.), Routledge 2026

“‘Weaned from Milk’: Agency and Authority in Francine Bennion’s ‘A Latter-day Saint Theology of Suffering,’” in *Latter-day Eloquence: Two Centuries of Mormon Oratory*, Ben Crosby and Isaac Richards (eds.), University of Illinois Press 2026

“Quoted at the Pulpit: Women and Authority in Fifty Years in General Conference.” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol 55, no. 4 2022

Paper on responsibility for structural injustice *under review*

Paper on role normativity *under review*

Talks & Presentations (*=refereed, †=invited)

The Ethics of Protest Resignations

*Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) Society *scheduled for 2026*

Non-Consequentialist Responsibility for Structural Injustice

*Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) Society 2025

Resisting and Reforming Roles through Consciousness-Raising

*Braga Meetings on Ethics and Political Philosophy 2026

*Canadian Philosophical Association (CPA) 2026

*Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) Society 2025

Caring Social Structures

*APA Eastern Division, Colloquium *scheduled for 2027*

*Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) Society *scheduled for 2026*

*International Social Philosophy Conference (NASSP) 2026

Clemson University 2025

Harvard Workshop on Care and Love as the Basis of Morality 2024

Mormonism, Feminism, and Relational Moral Agency

†LDS Philosophy Project Conference 2025

The Normative Character of Social Roles

Harvard Workshop on Local Norms and Normative Powers 2025

†Northeastern University Ethics Institute 2024

†University of Manitoba 2024

†University of California, Santa Cruz 2024

†Le Moyne College 2024

Moral Ignorance is Not Moral Indifference

*APA Eastern Division, Colloquium 2024

Role Responsibilities for Structural Injustice

*APA Central Division, Colloquium 2024

*International Social Philosophy Conference (NASSP) 2023

*Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy 2023

Social Philosophy for Tech Ethics Pedagogy (with Sonia Maria Pavel)

*teXne: Technology Ethics Exchange of the NorthEast 2023

Social Roles and Exculpatory Ignorance

MITing of the Minds Alumni Conference 2023

*Taking Responsibility Workshop at the René Descartes Lectures 2022

*Cambridge Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) International Conference 2022

*Vienna Forum for Analytic Philosophy (WFAP) Graduate Conference 2022

*Center for Ethics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs (CEPPA) Graduate Conference 2022

Feminist Ethics of Care as Latter-day Saint Ethics

*LDS Philosophy Project Conference 2022

*LDS Philosophy Project Workshop 2021

Social Roles and Moral Psychology

*Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy 2021

Comments

Holly Longair, "Theorizing Rural Identity," Canadian Philosophical Association (CPA) 2026

Quinn White, "I Love You,' 'Don't Worry About It': A Theory of Non-Deontic Normative Powers," APA Eastern Division, Symposium 2026

Rouven Symank, "Social Solidarity and Structural Injustice," Workshop on Solidarity in Times of Fracture 2024

Teaching

Manitoba (*=graduate seminar)

*Feminist Philosophy Winter 2027

AI, Robot, and Cyborg Ethics Fall 2026

*Social Roles Winter 2026

Goodness, Beauty, and Justice Winter 2026, 27

Moral Responsibility Fall 2025

Embedded EthiCS @ Harvard

Designed and taught ethics modules in computer science classes, working with philosophers and computer science faculty.

Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow 2025

"Generative AI and Meaningful Work." Programming Languages, Nada Amin

“Ethical Trade-offs in Operating Systems Design.” Operating Systems, James Mickens

Graduate Teaching Fellow

2021-2022

“Hardware Backdoors and Responsibility.” Computing Hardware, Vijay Reddi

“Designing Usable Programming Languages.” Programming Languages, Nada Amin

“Thinking Responsibly about AI Systems.” Artificial Intelligence, Ariel Procaccia

“Privacy and the Ethics of Client-Side Scanning.” Cryptography, Boaz Barak

“Ethics of Language Encoding.” Systems Programming and Machine Organization, Eddie Kohler

Experiential Ethics Program, MIT Office of Experiential Learning

Co-Director

2022 - 2023

Administratively ran program; developed expanded syllabus, lesson plans, and assignments; selected, trained, and supervised interdisciplinary teaching staff.

Assistant Director

2021 - 2022

Participated in administration, course development, and training teaching staff.

Teaching Fellow

2021

Primary instructor for small discussion group.

MIT Philosophy

Feminist Thought (TA for Sally Haslanger); guest lecture: “Care Economics”

Spring 2023

Bioethics (TA for Robin Scheffler and Haley Schilling); guest lecture: “Feminist (Bio) Ethics of Care”

Fall 2022

Minds and Machines (TA for E.J. Green); guest lecture: “The Chinese Room”

Spring 2022

Problems of Philosophy (TA for Caspar Hare)

Fall 2021

Ethics (TA for Tamar Schapiro)

Spring 2021

Philosophy of Religion (TA for Jack Spencer); guest lecture: “Religious Dissent”

Fall 2020

Research Supervision

Lily Jandresivits (supervisor)

from 2026

Shathy Akter (co-supervisor)

from 2025

Guest Lectures

†“Responsible Career Choices,” Being, Thinking, and Doing: Ethics in Your Life (MIT)

2022, 23, 24, 25

†“The Ethics of Care,” Introduction to Moral Philosophy, Barry Maguire (Stanford)

2019

Pedagogical Training

Teaching and Learning Certificate Program, Manitoba

2026

Kaufman Teaching Certificate Program, MIT

2023

Service

Professional Affiliations

Affiliated Researcher, Manitoba Lab for AI Law & Ethics

2026 - present

Board Member, University of Manitoba Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics

2025 - present

Community Engagement

Faculty Presenter, “Discover the UM Faculty of Arts” summer camp for grade 11

2026

Ethics Bowl Contributor, University of Manitoba Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics

2025, 2026

Panelist, Searching: Our Quest for Meaning in the Age of Science with Alan Lightman, MIT

2023

Theology Feature Editor, Exponent II Magazine

2021 - present

Co-founder and President, Stanford Ethics Bowl and Practical Ethics Club

2016 - 2019

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Co-organizer, MIT Minorities in Philosophy (MAP)

2023 - 2024

Co-Director, Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI-Boston)

2021, 2022

Co-designed syllabus for week-long diversity institute of seminars, colloquia, and professional development workshops; selected participants; selected and trained teaching fellows; led sessions and participated in panels; coordinated logistics and administration.

First-Year Mentor, MIT Philosophy

2021 – 2024

Mentorship Program Organizer, MIT Philosophy

2020 - 2022

Graduate Representative to the Committee on Department Life, MIT Philosophy

2020 - 2021

Academic Service

Referee for *Philosophical Studies*, *ACM FAccT*, *Journal of Mormon History*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Harvard-MIT Graduate Conference*

Visiting Speakers’ Committee, Manitoba Philosophy

2025 - present

Organizer, Harvard Workshop on Local Norms and Normative Powers

2025

Co-organizer, Harvard Workshop on Love or Care as the Basis of Morality

2024

Co-organizer, Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy

2021, 2022, 2023

Organizer, MIT Philosophy Reading Groups (various)

2020 - 2024

Graduate Representative to the Faculty, MIT Philosophy

2020 - 2021

Co-founder and President, Stanford Ethics Bowl and Practical Ethics Club

2016 - 2019

Awards & Honors

Graduate Woman of Excellence Honoree, MIT	2023
Awarded biannually in recognition of leadership, service, dedication to mentorship, and drive to improve the student experience.	
Presidential Fellowship for Graduate Studies, MIT	2019
Funding for first year of doctoral studies.	
Mothershead Prize for Outstanding Work in Moral and Political Philosophy, Stanford	2019
Awarded to one graduating senior in Philosophy.	
Phi Beta Kappa, Stanford	2019
Major Grant, Stanford	2018
Competitive grant for independent research funding.	
Chappell Lougee Scholarship, Stanford	2017
Competitive grant for independent research funding.	

References

For confidential letters of recommendation, please reach out to Christine Graham (cgraham@mit.edu).

Sally Haslanger • shaslang@mit.edu • Ford Professor of Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

Kieran Setiya • ksetiya@mit.edu • Professor • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

Tamar Schapiro • tamschap@mit.edu • Professor • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

Sam Berstler • berstler@mit.edu • Assistant Professor • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

E.J. Green (*teaching*) • egreen77@jh.edu • Miller Associate Professor • William H. Miller III Department of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University