Troy Seagraves | Curriculum Vitae

Ph.D. Candidate, Purdue University
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My Website

Areas of Specialization: Ethics, Metaethics, Epistemology
Areas of Competence: Applied Ethics, Philosophy of Religion

Education

Purdue University (2018-present)   Ph.D. in Philosophy, expected 2024
                                          Committee: Patrick Kain (advisor), Michael Bergmann, Paul Draper, Chris Tucker (William and Mary)

Dissertation: "Normative Roles of the Self"
Abstract: My dissertation examines overlooked normative roles played by agent-relative facts in metaethics, normative ethics, and philosophy of religion. I argue that agent-relative facts like one's commitments, practical identities, projects, function as modifiers of one's reasons rather than grounds of one's reasons. Comprising of four chapters, the first argues for an "Off-Brand Internalism" where the motivations of idealized agents modify the weights of a non-idealized agent's reasons rather than grounding said reasons. The second chapter provides my account of axiological stances, arguing that intrapersonal conflicts of these stances can explain the difficulty of choices where an agent feels torn between the available options. The third chapter argues against a version of the universality of reason judgments, showing it can be undermined by the existence of agent-relative modifiers. The fourth and final chapter argues that God has agent-relative facts that function as modifiers, overcoming a common complaint that God is objectionably mechanical.

Northern Illinois University (2016-2018)   M.A. in Philosophy
The Ohio State University (2012-2016)   B.A. in Philosophy

Publications

2023 - "Permissivism and Intellectual Virtue," *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*. Doi: 10.1080/0020174X.2023.2253291.

Articles Under Review

"Pure Interpersonal Practical Permissivism: Reviving an Argument Against the Universality of Reason Judgments"
"The Normative Significance of God's Self"
"Axiological Stances and Hard Choices"

Articles in Preparation

"Self-Hatred and its Vices"
"God's Reasons for Mercy"
"Off-Brand Internalism"

Selected Talks

2023: "A Significant Moral Permissivism," American Philosophical Association Central Meeting, Denver, Colorado. February 22nd-25th, 2023.

2023: "Pluralistic Valuing and Hard Choices," American Philosophical Association Eastern Meeting, Montreal, Canada. January 4th-7th, 2023.

2022: "God's Reasons for Mercy," The Society of Christian Philosophers Midwest Conference, Bowling Green, Ohio. November 11th-12th, 2022.

2022: "God's Caring and Evil," 'The Problem of Evil' 2022 PGSA Conference at Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri. October 7th-8th, 2022.

2022: "The Normative Significance of God's Self," Sixth Theistic Ethics Workshop, Williamsburg, Virginia. September 1st-3rd, 2022.

2022: "Pluralistic Valuing and Hard Choices," Ohio Philosophical Association 2022 Meeting, Akron, Ohio. April 23rd, 2022.

2021: "Intellectual Character and Permissivism," Notre Dame and Northwestern Epistemology Conference, held virtually. April 9th-10th, 2021.

2021: "Intellectual Character and Permissivism," Syracuse University Graduate Conference, held virtually. April 2nd-3rd, 2021.

2019: "Chastity as an Intellectual Virtue," Christopher Newport University Ethics Conference: 'Is there Still a Secular Virtue of Chastity?' Newport News, Virginia. March 29th-30th, 2019.

2019: "Aristotelian Constructivism and Public Reason," Kent State Graduate Conference, Kent, Ohio. March 9th, 2019.

2018: "Aristotelian Constructivism and Public Reason," Northwestern University Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics, Evanston, Illinois. Marth 8th-10th, 2018.

Teaching

As Instructor of Record

Spring 2023: Instructor of Record, *I Play Therefore I am: Introduction to Philosophy Through Video Games*, Department of Philosophy, Purdue University.

Fall 2021: Instructor of Record, *Global Moral Issues,* Department of Philosophy, Purdue University.

Spring 2021: Instructor of Record, *Global Moral Issues,* Department of Philosophy, Purdue University.

Fall 2020: Instructor of Record, *Global Moral Issues,* Department of Philosophy, Purdue University.

Spring 2020: Instructor of Record, *Global Moral Issues,* Department of Philosophy, Purdue University.

Fall 2019: Instructor of Record, *Global Moral Issues,* Department of Philosophy, Purdue University.

As Teaching Assistant/Grader

Fall 2023: Teaching Assistant, *I Play Therefore I am: Introduction to Philosophy Through Video Games*, Department of Philosophy, Purdue University. Primary Instructor: Javier Gomez-Lavin.

Spring 2023: Grader, *Introduction to Jewish Studies*, Jewish Studies Department, Purdue University. Primary Instructor: Olga Lyanda-Geller.

Summer 2020: Grader, *The Big Questions: Introduction to Philosophy*, Department of Philosophy, Purdue University. Primary Instructor: Samantha Seybold.

Spring 2018: Teaching assistant, *Philosophy of Law*, Department of Philosophy, Northing Illinois University. Primary Instructor: John Beaudoin.

Fall 2017: Teaching Assistant, *Contemporary Issues in Ethics*, Department of Philosophy, Northern
    Illinois University. Primary Instructor: Jason Hanna.

Awards and Assistantships
Purdue University Teaching Academy Graduate Teaching Award (Spring 2023)
Saul Lerner Graduate Student Teaching Award (Spring 2023)
Ross Lynn Research Assistantship (Spring 2022-Fall 2022)
Ross Fellowship (Fall 2018- Summer 2019)

Service to Department
Fall 2020- Spring 2022: Graduate Student Representative, Department of Philosophy, Purdue
    University.
Fall 2017-Spring 2018: Graduate Writing Mentor, Department of Philosophy, Northern Illinois
    University.

Professional Memberships
American Philosophical Association (2017-present)
Society of Christian Philosophers (2018-present)

Graduate Courses (* = audit)
Ethics:
    Seminar in Ethics: Kant's Moral and Political Philosophy, Fall 2022. Instructors: Patrick Kain and
    J.P. Messina.
    Contemporary Ethical Theory, Fall 2021. Instructor: Patrick Kain.
    Seminar in Ethics: Kant, Spring 2020. Instructor: Patrick Kain.
    Ethical Theory: Consequentialism, Spring 2018. Instructor: Steven Daskal.
    Ethical Theory: Procreation and Parenthood, Fall 2017. Instructor: Jason Hanna.
    Ethical Theory: Metaethics, Spring 2017. Instructor: Steven Daskal.
    Ethical Theory, Fall 2016. Instructor: Jason Hanna.
Metaphysics and Epistemology:
    Intuition, Fall 2023. Instructors: Michael Bergmann and Jeffrey Brower.
    Genealogical Defeaters, Summer 2023. Instructors: Michael Bergmann and Jeffrey Brower.
    Studies in Metaphysics, Fall 2020. Instructors: Michael Bergmann and Jeffrey Brower.
    Studies in the Theory of Knowledge, Spring 2019. Instructor: Michael Bergmann.
    Directed Reading in Metaphysics, Spring 2019. Instructor: Jan Cover.
    Topics in Metaphysics or Epistemology: Free Will, Fall 2017. Instructor: Alicia Finch.
    Epistemology, Spring 2017. Instructor: Geoff Pynn.
    20th Century Analytic Philosophy, Spring 2017. Instructor: David Buller.
    Topics in Metaphysics or Epistemology: Personal Identity, Fall 2016. Instructor: Carl Gillett.
Philosophy of Religion:
    **Advanced Philosophy of Religion*, Spring 2023. Instructor: Paul Draper.
    Divine Transcendence and Ineffability, Spring 2023. Instructors: Michael Bergmann and Jeffrey
    Brower.
    Theism and Creaturely Intrinsic Value, Fall 2022. Instructors: Michael Bergmann and Jeffrey
    Brower.
    Religious Disagreement, Summer 2022. Instructors: Michael Bergmann and Jeffrey Brower.
    Advanced Philosophy of Religion, Spring 2020. Instructors: Michael Bergmann and Paul Draper.

Philosophy of Religion: Religious Belief, Spring 2018. Instructor: Mylan Engel.

Ancient Philosophy:

*Special Topics in Ancient Philosophy: Plato and the Immoralist, Spring 2022. Instructor: Daniel Frank.

*Special Topics in Ancient Philosophy: Virtue Ethics, Spring 2021. Instructor: Daniel Frank.

Special Topics in Ancient Philosophy: Aristotle, Spring 2019. Instructor: Patricia Curd.

Modern Philosophy:

Continental Rationalism, Fall 2019. Instructor: Jan Cover.

Studies in Modern Philosophy: Spinoza's Ethics, Fall 2018. Instructor: Michael Jacovides.

Philosophy of Kant, Fall 2018. Instructor: Jaqueline Marina.

Medieval Philosophy:

Directed Reading in Philosophy: Medieval Christian Theism, Spring 2020. Instructor: Jeffrey Brower.

Studies in Medieval Philosophy: Powers of the Soul, Fall 2018. Instructor: Can Laurens Lowe.

Philosophy of Science, Language, and Logic:

Laws and Causes, Fall 2019. Instructor: Michael Jacovides.

Philosophy of Language, Fall 2019. Instructor: Rodney Bertolet.

Philosophy of Language, Spring 2018. Instructor: Lenny Clapp.

Metaphysics of Science, Fall 2017. Instructor: Carl Gillett.

Intermediate Logic, Fall 2016. Instructor: David Buller.

References

Patrick Kain (advisor)
Associate Professor of Philosophy
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Michael Bergmann
Professor of Philosophy
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Paul Draper
Professor of Philosophy
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Chris Yeomans (teaching letter)
Professor of Philosophy
cyeomans@purdue.edu

Chris Tucker (William and Mary)
Francis S. Haserot Professor of Philosophy
cstucker@wm.edu

Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation motivates underappreciated normative roles that agent-relative facts play in metaethics, normative ethics, and philosophy of religion. Familiar examples of these facts are an agent's commitments, projects, or practical identities. While it is common to assume that such facts ground some of an agent's normative reasons, I maintain that they function as modifiers, increasing or decreasing the weight of reasons. Comprised of four chapters, this dissertation begins by considering reasons internalism. Chapter 1 defends what I call "Off-Brand Internalism" which, in contrast to popular versions of reasons internalism, denies that reasons are grounded in some motivational fact of agents, but, in line with popular versions of reasons internalism, accepts that the weight of reasons depends on whether said motivational facts obtain. This position draws on parallels with how epistemic reasons function and avoids objections raised against its more popular internalist cousins. Chapter 2 delves into normative ethics, addressing "hard choices," interestingly difficulty choices where an agent feels torn between two options. While prevalent views explain these cases in terms of comparatives, I appeal to what I call axiological stances, sets of attitudes and strategies

adopted by agents for responding to what they take to be valuable. I show how intrapersonal conflicts of axiological stances generate all the relevant features of hard choices, capturing what makes hard choices characteristically difficult. Chapter 3 challenges the universality of reason judgments, the thesis that if an agent judges that, given G, she has reason to Φ, then she also accepts that any other agent, given G, would also have reason to Φ. Drawing from Peter Winch and developing his view via contemporary work in reasons holism, I argue that a non-trivial interpretation of the universality of reason judgments is false. Specifically, there are agent-relative facts that function as agent-relative modifiers which are not included in G. Lastly, chapter 4 considers the practical life of God and addresses what I call the divine mechanism complaint. This complaint is that, given certain conceptions of God's relation to normative reasons, God ends up being objectionably robotic. I understand this complaint as demanding a picture of God's practical life where he has some say over what his weightiest reasons are. I argue that God plausibly has agent-relative facts that function as agent-relative modifiers. God, then, is not robotic since he has some say in at least what his weightiest reasons are.