

# ADAM ETINSON

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 D.O.B: 23 March 1982, Montréal, Canada

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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<b>Lecturer in Philosophy</b>	2016 —>
School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies, University of St Andrews	
<b>Lecturer in Human Rights</b>	2014-2016
Pozen Family Center for Human Rights, University of Chicago	
<b>Mellon Sawyer Postdoctoral Fellow</b>	2012-2014
Center for Global Ethics and Politics, CUNY Graduate Center	
<b>GRIPP Postdoctoral Fellow</b>	2011-2012
The Center for Research in Ethics, University of Montreal	

## EDUCATION

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<b>University of Oxford</b> , DPhil in Philosophy (PhD)	2008-2011
<i>Thesis Title:</i> “Human Rights and the Problem of Ethnocentrism”	
<i>Supervisors:</i> Jeremy Waldron, Roger Crisp, John Tasioulas	
<i>Examiners:</i> Henry Shue, Jonathan Wolff	
<b>University of Oxford</b> , BPhil in Philosophy	2006-2008
<b>McGill University</b> , BA Honours Philosophy ( <i>First Class Honours</i> )	2001-2005

## RESEARCH

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**AOS:** Ethics; Social and Political Philosophy  
**AOC:** Epistemology; Philosophy of Law

## PUBLICATIONS (\* Indicates Peer-reviewed)

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### Books

2018: *Human Rights: Moral or Political?* (Oxford University Press, March 2018), ed. Adam Etinson – 31 authors, with an introduction and commentary by the editor \*

### Articles & Chapters

2018: “Conversation” in *New Literary History*, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 267-273.  
 2018: “Some Myths About Ethnocentrism” in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 96, No. 2, pp. 209-224.

- 2014: “On Shareable Reasons: A Comment on Forst” in *The Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 76-88 \*
- 2013: “Human Rights, Claimability, and the Uses of Abstraction” in *Utilitas*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 463-486 \*
- 2012: “Political and Naturalistic Conceptions of Human Rights: A False Polemic?” in *The Journal of Moral Philosophy*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 327-352 (With S. Matthew Liao) \*
- 2010: “Cosmopolitanism: Cultural, Moral, and Political” in *Sovereign Justice: Global Justice in a World of Nations*, G. Angelis & R. Queiroz (de Gruyter: New York), pp. 25-47.
- 2008: “Aboriginal Oral History Evidence and Canadian Law” in the *Central European Journal of Canadian Studies* (CEJCS), Vol. 6, 2008, pp. 97-105 \*

### Reviews, Essays, & Op-Eds

- 2018: “How High to Dream?” in *The Times Literary Supplement*, July 26<sup>th</sup>. (Reviewing Samuel Moyn’s *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Age of Inequality* [HUP, 2018])
- 2018: “Book Review: *Reframing the Intercultural Dialogue on Human Rights: A Philosophical Approach*, by Jeffrey Flynn” in *Political Theory*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 312-318. \*
- 2017: “Is a Life Without Struggle Worth Living?” in *The Stone*, *The New York Times*, October 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- 2013: “Of Cannibals, Kings, and Culture: The Problem of Ethnocentricity” in *The Stone*, *The New York Times*, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> – Republished in: *The Stone Reader* (New York: Liveright, 2016), eds. Simon Critchley & Peter Catapano, pp. 79-84; & *Modern Ethics: A Stone Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2017), eds. Simon Critchley & Peter Catapano, pp. 306-311.
- 2012: “100 Days of Student Protests in Québec: *Printemps Érablé* or Much Ado about Nothing?” in *Dissent* (Co-authored with Carlos Fraenkel), May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- 2012: “A Rights-Based Utopia?” in *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 294-299. Also in: *The Utopian*, with an attached response by Samuel Moyn. \*
- 2010: “To Be or Not to Be? Charles Beitz on the Philosophy of Human Rights” in *Res Publica*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 235-244. \*

### ADDITIONAL FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

*Erasmus Teaching Fellow* (March 2018)

UFR de Philosophie, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France

*Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) – Engaging with Government* (March 2018)

Institute for Government, London, UK (3-day intensive course)

*Visiting Scholar* (Summer 2014)

PluriCourts, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

*Visiting Scholar* (2013-2014)

Department of Philosophy, New York University, New York, USA

*Commonwealth Scholarship* (2009-2011)

The British Council, London, UK – for doctoral studies at Oxford University

*Doctoral Research Grant* (2008-2011)

Le Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture, Québec, Canada

*Overseas Research Student Award* (2007-2010)

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford

*Special Travel Grant* (2008)

New College, University of Oxford – for research on ethnocentrism in Kampala, Uganda

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE (\* Indicates self-designed syllabus)**

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**The University of St Andrews (2016 →)**

PY5319 – Subjectivity in Value, Normativity, and Morality (*with Justin Snedegar*) \*  
 PY4659 – Timely Topics in Political Philosophy \*  
 PY4658 – Why Does the World Exist? (*with Alex Douglas*) \*  
 PY4652 – Toleration in the Early Modern Period (*with Alex Douglas*) \*  
 PY3200 – Reading Philosophy 2: Texts in Ethics, Aesthetics, and Political Philosophy  
 PY5403 – Intuitions and Philosophical Methodology (*with Jessica Brown*) \*  
 PY5326 – Twentieth Century Philosophers: David Wiggins (*MLitt Seminar*) \*  
 PY4652 – The Philosophy of Human Rights (*with Elizabeth Ashford*) \*  
 PY1011 – Moral & Political Controversies

**The University of Chicago (2014 – 2016)**

HMRT 39003 – Moral Sainthood \*  
 HMRT 30600 – Foundations of Human Rights (*Graduate Seminar*) \*  
 HMRT 26151 – Human Rights and Human Diversity \*  
 HMRT 26150 – Human Dignity \*

**Hunter College, City University of New York (2013 – 2014)**

PHILO 246 – Introduction to Political Philosophy \*  
 HR 200 – Introduction to Human Rights \*

**The Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York (2013 – 2014)**

PHIL 431 – Ethics \*

**McGill University (2009, 2011 – 2012)**

PHIL 481 – Toleration (*Co-taught with Carlos Fraenkel*) \*  
 PHIL 481 – Freedom, Diversity, Culture (*Co-taught with Carlos Fraenkel*) \*  
 PHIL 240 – Introduction to Political Philosophy (*76 registered students*) \*

**Oxford University (Hilary Term, 2010)**

General Philosophy (*Teaching Assistant for Dr. Ralph Walker*)

**WORK IN PROGRESS**

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**What's So Special About Human Dignity? (DRAFT)**

This article argues that human dignity is a normative concept closely tied to concerns about humiliation or degradation. It challenges common understandings of human dignity as (i) a brute indicator of moral status, and (ii) a vehicle for concerns about autonomy or moral “inviolability.”

**On Falling Short (DRAFT)**

Many of us should do more – that is, more than we currently do – for others. We know we are morally imperfect. And yet many of us make easy peace with this. Is it ever right to “accept” our own moral badness? This article explores various ways in which it might be.

**Moral Minima (Under Preparation)**

The article distinguishes between various *forms* of “moral minimalism,” and examines their difficulties and attractions, particularly in the context of human rights theorizing.

**“Breakthrough” Conversations (New Project)**

This new project explores “breakthrough” conversations: in which interlocutors who are deeply divided somehow manage to navigate their disagreements and talk constructively, to reach some profound level of mutual understanding, a change of mind, or to establish newfound good will, etc. The project examines what is distinctive about such conversations, and what conditions tend to make them more likely.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS**“On Aristocratic Dignity”**

- Invited presentation at *Rights and Reciprocity: A Workshop with Andrea Sangiovanni on the Themes of Humanity without Dignity*, University of Dresden, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**“On Disrupting (Ethnocentric) Bias”**

- Invited presentation at *Department of Politics*, University of Sheffield, Feb 28, 2018.

**“On Falling Short”**

- Invited presentation at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, March 22, 2018.
- Invited presentation at the *Political Theory Reading Group*, U. Edinburgh, Jan 17, 2018
- Invited presentation at the *Northern Political Philosophy Group*, Edinburgh Dec 7, 2018
- Invited presentation at *NYU Center for Bioethics*, NYU, Oct 6, 2017-10-20.
- Invited presentation at *Law and Ethics Society*, Columbia University, Oct 11, 2017.
- Invited presentation at the conference, *The Ethics of Giving*, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK, May 23-25, 2017.

**“Moral Minima”**

- Invited presentation at *APA Eastern Division Meeting*, January 7-10, 2019, New York.
- Invited presentation at *How Demanding Should Human Rights Be? An Interdisciplinary Workshop*, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL, Oct 13-14, 2017.
- Invited presentation at the *Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association*, San Francisco, March 28-April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. (with Robert Simpson)

**“What’s So Special About Human Dignity?”**

- Invited presentation at *The University of Groningen*, Department of Philosophy, March 6, 2017, Groningen, The Netherlands.
- Refereed presentation at the *Edinburgh Legal Theory Workshop*, held at the University of Edinburgh, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Refereed presentation at *The Future of Human Dignity*, a conference held at the University of Utrecht, October 12-14, 2016.
- Invited presentation at the *European Consortium for Political Research: Annual Meeting*, University of Montreal, August 26<sup>th</sup> 2015. (Panel: Human Rights and Dignity)
- Invited presentation at *Human Rights and Human Dignity: A Workshop*, University of Chicago, May 29<sup>th</sup> 2015.

**“On Being Faithful to the ‘Practice’ of Human Rights”**

- Invited presentation at a *Workshop on the Philosophy of Human Rights* at the University of St Andrews, in response to James W. Nickel, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Refereed presentation at the annual meeting of the *American Political Science Association* in Philadelphia, PA, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.

- Refereed presentation at *Theory & Practice: The 2015 Annual Weissbourd Conference*, University of Chicago, May 9<sup>th</sup> 2015.
- Invited presentation at the *Human Rights Workshop*, University of Chicago, Jan 14 2015.
- Invited presentation at *Workshop on Human Rights*, McGill Univ. (Law), Nov 20 2014.

#### “Some Myths About Ethnocentrism”

- Invited presentation at the *Philosophy Club*, organized by undergraduates at the University of St Andrews, on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Invited presentation at *Social Theory Workshop*, University of Chicago, Oct 15 2015.
- Invited presentation at *Practical Philosophy Workshop*, Department of Philosophy, University of Chicago, March 20<sup>th</sup> 2015.
- Invited presentation at *New Research in Practical Philosophy*, Queen’s College, CUNY, April 19<sup>th</sup> 2013.

#### Invited Commentaries

- 2019: Commentary on Pablo Gilabert’s *Human Rights and Human Dignity* (OUP, 2018), at the *Pacific Division Meeting of the APA*, April 17-20, 2019.
- 2017: Commentary on George Letsas’s paper, “Minimalism and Maximalism in Human Rights: A False Dilemma?” at *How Demanding Should Human Rights Be? An Interdisciplinary Workshop*, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL, Oct 13-14.
- 2016: Commentary on Luke Ulas and Pietro Maffettone’s paper on legitimacy at *Contemporary Political Thought*, a conference at Durham University, December 7<sup>th</sup>.
- 2016: Commentary on Ryan Beaton’s paper, “The Recent Focus of Settler-State Courts on the Procedural Legitimation of State Sovereignty over Indigenous Lands” at *Human Rights and Empire Graduate Student Conference*, May 19-20, University of Chicago.
- 2014: Commentary on Gopal Sreenivasan’s “Still no Human Right to Health(Care)” at *Is Health Care a Human Right*, a symposium at the University of Chicago, October 10<sup>th</sup>.
- 2013: Comment on John Tasioulas’, “Towards a Philosophy of Human Rights” at *Theorizing Human Rights: A Conference in Honor of James Nickel*, Duke University, March 22.
- 2012: Comment on Rainer Forst’s “Toleration and Democracy” in *Democratic Citizenship and the Recognition of Cultural Differences*, CUNY Graduate Center, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### Invited Lectures

- 2018: “Feasibility and Claimability in Human Rights Theory” – Two lectures in Emmanuel Picavet’s Master’s Seminar, *Philosophie et Société*, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, March 2018.
- 2015: “The Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights” in LAWS 96205: *International Human Rights Law and Advocacy*, Co-taught by B Citro & C Flores, UChicago Law.
- 2014: “Feasibility and Claimability in Human Rights Theory” in Summer Course: *Human Rights, International Law, and Cosmopolitanism*, University of Oslo, June 20<sup>th</sup>

#### EDITORIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

##### Assistant Director

- Center for Ethics, Philosophy and Public Affairs (CEPPA), Department of Philosophy, University of St Andrews. Director: Theron Pummer (St Andrews)

**Editor**

- [Volume Editor] *Human Rights: Moral or Political?* (Oxford University Press), 33 authors
- [Special Issue Editor] *Journal of Social Philosophy*, “Democratic Citizenship and the Recognition of Cultural Differences” (with Carol Gould & Joshua Keton)

**Peer-Reviewer**

- Journals: (1) *Constellations*; (2) *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*; (3) *Human Rights Review*; (4) *Journal of Moral Philosophy*; (5) *Journal of Global Ethics*; (6) *Philosophical Quarterly*; (7) *Philosophical Studies* (8) *Res Publica*; (9) *Law & Philosophy*.

**PhD Students**

- 2018 -> Rasa Daviducierte, Co-Supervised with Rowan Cruft.
- 2018 -> Deryn Thomas, Primary Supervisee, working on the meaningfulness of work.
- 2018 -> Colin McLean, Secondary PhD Supervisee.
- 2017 -> Jakob Hinze, Primary Supervisee, working on epistemic arguments for democracy.

**Thesis Supervision**

- 2018: Andreas-Johann Sorger, “Truth Commissions Beyond Transitional Justice” (MLitt)
- 2018: J. Rumbelow, “The Will of the People: An Essay in Political Epistemology” (MLitt)
- 2017: Rufaida Al-Hashimi, “Human Dignity in Human Rights” (Undergraduate, St Andrews)
- 2017: Jakob Hinze, “Epistemic Implications of Democratic Decisions” (MLitt, St Andrews)
- 2017: Jonathan Fogarty, “Can Human Dignity Ground Human Rights” (MLitt, St Andrews)
- 2016: Timothy Hoff, “The Claimability of Human Rights: How Far Can We Go? A Critique of Kantian Claimability” (MAPH thesis, University of Chicago)

**Departmental Duties**

- Visiting Day Coordinator & Outreach Officer, *Department of Philosophy, University of St Andrews* (2016-Present)
- Curriculum Designer, *University of Chicago*. Collaboratively designed an interdisciplinary core undergraduate curriculum in human rights at the University of Chicago (Spring 2015)

**Conference, Society, Event, and Workshop Organizer**

*Northern Political Philosophy Group*. Co-organized with Ben Sachs (Philosophy, University of St Andrews) – 4-6 meetings a year, where we hold workshops on works-in-progress by political philosophers at universities across Scotland and northern England.

*Strangers Drowning: An Evening with Larissa MacFarquhar*. In cooperation with the Pozen Family Center for Human Rights and the Seminar Coop Bookstore, at the University of Chicago, I moderated a public discussion with Larissa MacFarquhar, author of *Strangers Drowning* (Penguin, 2015), a book about extreme altruism. May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

*Society for the Philosophy of Human Rights*. Co-organized with Pablo Gilabert (Concordia University) and Robert Simpson (Monash University) – Annual meetings at the APA. 2016 Pacific Division meeting included Matthew Liao, James Nickel, Elizabeth Ashford, Leif Wenar, Christian Barry, R.J. Leland, and Japa Pallikkathayil.

*Human Rights and Human Dignity: A Workshop*, University of Chicago. Co-organized with Pablo Gilabert and with support from the PFCHR – May 29<sup>th</sup> 2015.

*Mellon Sawyer Seminar Series*, CUNY Graduate Center, “Democracy and the Recognition of Cultural Differences,” Postdoctoral Assistant to Carol C. Gould (2012-2013).

*Philosophy Workshop in Akwesasne*, Akwesasne Native American Reservation, Ontario. Co-organized with Carlos Fraenkel – Fall & Winter 2011.

*13<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Oxford Philosophy Conference*, University of Oxford – Fall 2009.

## LANGUAGES

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English (Mother tongue); French (Fluent); Spanish (Fluent); Hebrew (Basics).

## REFEREES

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**Jeremy Waldron**, University Professor,  
School of Law, New York University  
○ jeremy.waldron@nyu.edu

**Roger Crisp**, Professor of Moral  
Philosophy, University of Oxford  
○ roger.crisp@philosophy.ox.ac.uk

**Carol C. Gould**, Distinguished Professor  
of Philosophy, The Graduate Center, CUNY  
○ carolcgoald@gmail.com

**S. Matthew Liao**, Arthur Zitrin Chair in  
Bioethics, NYU  
○ matthew.liao@nyu.edu

**James W. Nickel**, Professor of Philosophy  
and Law, University of Miami  
○ nickel@law.miami.edu

**John Tasioulas**, Chair of Politics,  
Philosophy, and Law, KCL  
○ john.tasioulas@kcl.ac.uk

**Samuel Moyn**, Professor of Law, Yale  
University  
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**Daniel Weinstock**, Full Professor, Faculty  
of Law, McGill University  
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**Jonathan Wolff**, Blavatnik Professor of  
Public Philosophy, University of Oxford  
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**Mark Philip Bradley**, Professor of  
International History, University of Chicago  
○ mbradley@uchicago.edu

**Carlos Fraenkel** (*Teaching Referee*)  
Associate Professor, McGill University  
○ carlos.fraenkel@mcgill.ca