

Molly Gurdon Pinkoski
Zephyr Institute
560 College Avenue
Palo Alto, CA, 94306
mcg2197@columbia.edu | mpinkoski@zephyr.org
www.mollygurdonpinkoski.com

Research Areas

Areas of Specialization: Ethics, Metaethics

Areas of Competence: Ancient Philosophy, Action Theory, Philosophy of Law, History of Ethics

Education

Columbia University, New York, NY, USA

Ph.D. in Philosophy

Expected May 2022

M.Phil in Philosophy

May 2020

M.A. in Philosophy

May 2019

Dissertation: *Neo-Aristotelian Absolute Prohibitions*

Sponsor: Katja Vogt

My dissertation articulates and defends a novel conception of absolute moral prohibitions, along broadly Aristotelian lines. In the wake of Elizabeth Anscombe's famous arguments against consequentialist moral philosophy, the latter half of the 20th century saw a surge of philosophical interest in Aristotle's ethics. But few modern neo-Aristotelians take much interest in a view that Anscombe and Aristotle share: that there are specific kinds of actions that are inherently, and therefore always, wrong. Against the widespread view of absolute moral prohibitions as a primarily Kantian preoccupation, I argue that absolute prohibitions are an essential component of an Aristotelian ethical outlook, and that these prohibitions are both much more intuitive, and much more important, than is commonly thought. On my view, absolute prohibitions are best formulated not as transcendent laws of reason or divine commands, but as foundational principles for the kind of practical reasoning and affective dispositions necessary for living a good life.

University of Oxford, Christ Church, Oxford, U.K.

B.A. in Philosophy and Modern Languages

Thesis: "Love and Union in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*"

Supervisor: Thomas K. Johansen

Awards and Fellowships

Zephyr Institute Graduate Fellowship, 2021-present

Toby Strober Memorial Scholarship, Columbia University, 2020-2021

Institute for Humane Studies, Humane Studies Fellowship, 2018-2019, 2020-2021

Benjamin Wolstein Fellowship, Columbia University, 2018-2019, 2019-2020

Teaching

Ethics *Spring 2021* (TA) Michele Moody-Adams

Philosophy of Law *Fall 2020* (TA) Michele Moody-Adams

Introduction to Logic *Spring 2020* (TA) John Morrison

Aristotle *Fall 2019* (TA) Katja Vogt

Methods & Problems of Philosophy *Spring 2019* (TA) Melissa Fusco

Ethics *Fall 2018* (TA) Katja Vogt

Talks and Presentations

"Practical Thinking and Absolute Wrongs"

- Research Group in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (video conference, August 2020)

“Learning in Love: What Motivates Us to Pursue Liberal Learning?”
The Morningside Institute, April 2020

“Aristotelian Absolute Prohibitions”

- Wittgenstein: Law and Action, 11th Annual Conference of the British Wittgenstein Society, University of Surrey (Guildford, Surrey, July 2020) — postponed due to COVID-19
- Munich-New York City Workshop in Ethics, Columbia University (New York, March 2020)
- Research Group in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (video conference, July 2019)

Invited Commentaries

Jens Timmermann, “Kant’s ‘Supposed Right to Lie’”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (November 2020)

Rachel Barney, “Becoming Bad: Aristotle on Vice and Moral Habituation”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (September 2019)

Justin Clarke-Doane, “Objectivity and Evaluation”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (October 2018)

Susan Sauvé Meyer, “Why Pleasure and Reason are not the Good: *Philebus* 20b-23b”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (October 2017)

Conferences

“The Moral Imagination of the Novel” (New York, October 2019)

Organizer

Sponsors: The Morningside Institute, the Thomistic Institute, Columbia University Department of Philosophy

“Finding the Way to Truth: Sources, History, and Impact of the Meditative Tradition” (New York, February 2019)

Discussant

Sponsors: Center for New Narratives in Philosophy, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, the Departments of Philosophy, English and Comparative Literature, French, and the Maison Francaise at Columbia University

“Desire and the Good Life: Reflections on the Aristotelian Tradition” (New York, October 2018)

Organizer

Sponsors: The Morningside Institute, the Thomistic Institute, Columbia University Department of Philosophy

Selected Coursework

Virtue Ethics Dhananjay Jagannathan*

Relativism Carol Rovane*

Ethics Samuel Scheffler (NYU)

Self-Knowledge Akeel Bilgrami

Metaethics Katja Vogt*

Practical Reason Joseph Raz (CU Law)

Aristotelian Naturalisms Dhananjay Jagannathan

Ancient Epistemology Jessica Moss (NYU)

Problems in Political Philosophy Joseph Raz (CU Law)

*indicates audit

Referee

Nous

References

Katja Vogt

Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University

kv2101@columbia.edu

Michele Moody-Adams

Joseph Straus Professor of Political Philosophy and Legal Theory

moody-adams@columbia.edu

Dhananjay Jagannathan

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University

d.jagannathan@columbia.edu

Axel Honneth

Jack C. Weinstein Professor of the Humanities, Columbia University

ah2952@columbia.edu