

Paul Forrester

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EDUCATION

Yale University

Fall 2020 – Present

PhD in Philosophy

Dissertation: A Theory of Economic Justice

Committee: Stephen Darwall, Daniel Greco (co-advisors), Shelly Kagan

Duke University

Fall 2015 – Spring 2019

BA in Philosophy and Political Science

RESEARCH

Areas of Specialization: Ethics and Political Philosophy

Areas of Competence: Epistemology; Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE); Business Ethics; Philosophy of Science (esp. social)

Additional Teaching Areas: Early Modern Philosophy; Logic

Publications

The Desire Machine. 2024. *Analysis*, Volume 84, Issue 2, Pages 249–257.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/anad061>

A New Argument for Uniqueness about Evidential Support. 2023. *Episteme*, 1-22.

doi: 10.1017/epi.2023.28

Concurrent Awareness Desire Satisfactionism. 2023. *Utilitas*, 35(3), 198-217

doi: 10.1017/S0953820823000080.

Epistemicism and Commensurability. 2022. *Inquiry*, December, 1–34.

doi: 10.1080/0020174X.2022.2155870.

Papers Under Review

“Locke and George on Original Acquisition.”

“Mistakes and Rational Choice Theory.” (R&R at *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*)

“Practical Reasons for Pragmatism.” (R&R at *American Philosophical Quarterly*)

“The Ontology of Events.” (R&R at *Erkenntnis*)

Selected Papers in Preparation

“Two Just Taxes: Progressive Consumption Tax and Land Value Tax”

“The Economic State of Nature”

“Emissions Rights and Environmental Justice”

“The Ethics and Epistemology of Digital Advertising”

“ESG and Asset Manager Capitalism”

“Natural Asset Companies and the Financialization of Nature”

Conference Presentations (* = peer reviewed)

“Two Just Taxes”

--1/8/25 American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting PPE Affiliated Session.*

“Emissions Rights and Environmental Justice.”

--10/12/24 Virginia Philosophical Association.*

“Two Moral Deficits of Modern Finance.”

--11/16/24 Eighth Annual Philosophy, Politics and Economics Society Meeting.*

“Locke and George on Original Acquisition”

--2/20/25 American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting.*

--8/8/24 University of San Diego, Workshop on Classical Liberal Thought.

--11/17/23 Yale British Studies Colloquium.*

--11/3/23 Seventh Annual Philosophy, Politics and Economics Society Meeting.*

“The Generalized Market Failures Approach”

--8/9/24 Society for Business Ethics Annual Conference.*

--5/3/24 Faculty Ethics Workshop; Georgetown McDonough School of Business, Institute for the Study of Markets and Ethics.

“Mistakes and Rational Choice Theory”

--3/30/24 Philosophy of Social Science Roundtable. University of Texas at Dallas.*

“The Desire Machine”

--3/20/24 Pacific Division Meeting, American Philosophical Association.*

--10/14/23 Philadelphia Normativity Conference, University of Pennsylvania.*

--8/10/23 Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress.*

--4/15/23 Texas Tech Graduate Conference, Texas Tech University.*

“ESG and Asset Manager Capitalism”

--5/3/24 Future of Capitalism Conference, University of Chicago.*

--2/27/24 Legitimacy Beyond the State Workshop, Australian National University.*

--12/1/23 Zicklin Workshop Series in Normative Business Ethics at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.*

--11/3/23 Seventh Annual Philosophy, Politics and Economics Society Meeting, New Orleans.*

--6/2/23 Financial Ethics Workshop at the University of Gothenburg.*

“On the Fittingness of Desire”

--10/20/23 Well-being Working Group.

“The Epistemic Harms of Digital Advertising”

--8/5/23 Society for Business Ethics Annual Meeting, Boston.*

--5/26/23 Seventh Annual Workshop: “Business Ethics in the 6ix” at Ted Rogers School of Management at Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto Ontario.*

--11/4/22 Sixth Annual Philosophy, Politics and Economics Society Meeting, New Orleans.*

“Hybrid Consequentialism”

--6/30/22 Early Career Conference Programme, Global Priorities Institute, University of Oxford.

--12/8/22 Uncertain Oughts Workshop, University of Helsinki.*

“Lifetime and Momentary Well-being”

--3/23/23 Good Enough Life Workshop at Mississippi State University (winner of the MPA Graduate Student Paper Prize).*

“Concurrentism Awareness Desire Satisfactionism”

--10/8/22 University of Zurich, Workshop on Rights, Respect and Well-being.*

“The Fittingness of Individual and Collective Attitudes”

--4/16/22 Texas A&M Graduate Philosophy Conference.*

--3/15/22 Metaethics in Society Conference at the University of Nottingham.*

“Two Kinds of Permissivism and Two Kinds of Evidentialism”

--3/25/22 Joint Meeting of the SC and NC Societies for Philosophy.*

“Epistemicism and Commensurability”

--8/13/21 Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress.*

Comments

Comments on Elizabeth Harman’s “Love as the Reason We Need Abortion”

--9/21/23 Yale Law School Law and Philosophy Colloquium.

Other Conferences Attended/Organized

Summer School on History of Economic Thought, Duke University	2024
Teaching Business Ethics Workshop, Georgetown McDonough School of Business	2024
Yale Early Career Ethics Workshop (organizer)	2023
Ethics of Consciousness Summer School, Rice Paris Center	2023
Transformative Experience Workshop (co-organizer, Yale University)	2022
Cornell Workshop on Mind and Value	2022

Other Research Experience

Visiting Scholar in Ethics of Technology, Tepper School of Business, Carnegie Mellon University	2024
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Graduate Coursework

At Yale

Normative Jurisprudence (Yaffe, audit)	2023
Behavioral Economics (Ederer and Frederick)	
Normative Ethics (Kagan)	2022
Topics in Epistemology (Stanley and Williamson, audit)	
Good and Will (Della Rocca, audit)	
Early Modern Philosophy of Mind (Winkler and Ehli)	
Metaethics (Darwall)	2021
The First Person (Paul)	
Language and Convention (Szabo)	
Recent Work in Analytic Philosophy of Religion (DeRose and Pittard)	
Idealization and Model Building (Greco and Williamson)	
Early Modern Philosophy of Language (Winkler and Szabo)	
Tutorial in Epistemology (Greco)	
First-Year Seminar (Paul and Della Rocca)	2020

Metaphysics (Paul)
 Disagreement and Higher-Order Evidence (Pittard)
 Hylomorphism (Charles)

At Duke and UNC

Metaphysics (van Inwagen, Duke)	2019
Symbolic Logic (Pavese, Duke)	
Advanced Topics in Philosophy of Science (Lange, UNC)	2018
Philosophy of Mind (Neander and Pavese, Duke)	
Advanced Topics in PPE (Bovens, UNC, audit)	
Beginnings of Analytic Philosophy (Nelson, UNC)	
Comparative Ethics (Wong, Duke)	
Contemporary Theories of Democracy (Knight, Duke)	

TEACHING

Phil S183: Philosophy of Technology (teaching assistant)	Summer 2024
Phil 080: Human Beings and Nature – Topics in Metaphysics, Mind and Action (Primary Instructor)	Fall 2023
Phil S175: Introduction to Ethics (Primary Instructor)	Summer 2023
Phil 126: Early Modern Philosophy (TA for Michael Della Rocca)	Spring 2023
Phil 281: Infinity (TA for Zoltan Szabo)	Fall 2022
Phil 165: The Philosophy and Cog. Sci. of Consciousness (teaching assistant)	Summer 2022
Phil 110: Topics in Philosophy (Grader for Dan Greco)	Summer 2022

SERVICE

Moderator and Judge, Connecticut Ethics Bowl	2023
Yale's Working Group in Moral Philosophy, organizer	2022-present
Yale's Working Group in Epistemology, Logic, Language, Mind and Metaphysics (ELLMM City), organizer	2020-2023
Yale Philosophy Department Colloquium Committee, member	2021
Yale Graduate-Undergraduate Advising Program, advisor	2021-present
-Formal or informal advising relationship with five undergraduates	
Yale Prospective Graduate Student Committee	2021-2022
Duke Philosophy Society, co-president	2019

AWARDS & HONORS

C. Lowell Harriss Dissertation Fellowship (\$10,000)	2024
-Lincoln Institute for Land Policy	
Emerging Scholar, Society for Business Ethics	2023
Global Priorities Fellowship, Oxford University	2022-2023
Yale Departmental Travel Fellowship (3x)	2021-
Yale Supplemental Departmental Travel Fellowship	2023-
Yale MacMillan Center Travel Fellowship	2022

Yale GSAS Conference Travel Fellowship (3x)
Phi Beta Kappa (Duke University)

2021-
2020

REFERENCES

Daniel Greco
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Professor of Philosophy
Yale University

Stephen Darwall
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Andrew Downey Orrick Prof of Philosophy
Yale University

Shelly Kagan
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Clark Professor of Philosophy
Yale University

Michael Della Rocca
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Sterling Professor of Philosophy
Yale University
(teaching reference)

Dissertation Abstract: A Theory of Economic Justice

Trade, specialization and division of labor are by far the most important and widespread forms of cooperation among human beings. For instance, millions of people cooperated in a mostly decentralized way to produce the device you are now using to read this. Yet, the normative dimensions of the institutions that ground economic cooperation have been under-theorized. My dissertation develops a theory of justice fitting to the domain of economic cooperation. There are two basic processes that generate economic value. Production (ch. 1-3) is the conversion of natural resources into useful artifacts. Consumption (ch. 4-6) is the use of these artifacts to enhance human welfare.

In an introductory chapter, I imagine individuals in the economic state of nature, where each person produces everything that they consume. In Hobbes's political state of nature, life is "nasty, brutish and short" because of ubiquitous violence, but life is just as bad if people cannot economically cooperate. I sketch how institutions that facilitate economic cooperation might emerge and allow people to exit the economic state of nature, forming economic society. In the second chapter, I examine one foundational institution of economic cooperation: property. Property rights over natural resources and improvements to those resources, though treated similarly in the law, are in fact very different. Locke famously argued that mixing one's labor with a natural resource gives one an entitlement to the resource. But the most this labor mixing argument establishes is that one is entitled to the value of the improvements one creates. Indeed, if natural resources are scarce, those who own resources will collect monopoly rents from and oppress those with no resources. Following Henry George, and others, I argue that a land value tax would be an efficient and just institution; it would prevent exploitation and ensure that everyone receives what they are entitled to, and would eliminate unjust inequality. After developing this view of original acquisition, the third chapter analyzes the conditions of just exchange, which are quite demanding. Perfectly competitive markets constitute the ideal of just exchange, and I pay special attention to analyzing the distributive obligations of participants in imperfect, real-world markets.

The dominant view of consumer welfare among economists and policy makers is desire satisfactionism: the satisfaction of someone's desires is what makes them well-off. Though this approach enables certain insights, it has important limitations. In chapter four (recently published in *Analysis*), I propose a thought experiment—the desire machine—in which all of one's desires are changed to match the world. As such, according to desires satisfactionism, one is perfectly well-off. But this is not right: wanting what you get is not, in general, as good as getting what you want. The satisfaction of desires that are formed in the wrong kind of way (e.g., through manipulative advertising) or for the wrong kind of object provide only limited well-being. In the fifth chapter (recently published in *Utilitas*), I argue that there must be temporal overlap between when one desires something and when one gets the desired good, and one must be aware that one receives the goods that one desires, in order for those goods to make one well-off. In the final chapter, I examine the problem of incoherent desires. Just as it is always bad for an individual to have incoherent desires, it is also bad for a group of people to have collectively incoherent desires, which occurs when inconsistent desires are possessed by different individuals. Unfortunately, collectively incoherent desires are a ubiquitous feature of social life, and they lead people to waste resources in a destructive competition over scarce goods. Veblen was the first to offer a systematic treatment of how, as society advances, greater amounts of resources are wasted in the pursuit of a fixed supply of positional goods through the process of conspicuous consumption. But he did not see that there is a social institution that can reclaim these wasted resources and put an end to destructive competition: the progressive consumption tax. This tax shares the core virtuous property of the Georgist land value tax: both tax a feature (land and social position) that has an intrinsically fixed supply and to which no one could justly gain a permanent, exclusive entitlement. Both penalize people who act on preferences that are inconsistent with the preferences of others, and both enable and subsidize cooperation in the pursuit of diverse but compatible ends. As such, these institutions are cornerstones of a just economic order.