

# SARAH LUBLINK

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## CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

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Visiting Assistant Professor, Huron University College, 2009-2010

## EDUCATION

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Ph.D. Philosophy, The University of Western Ontario, 2009  
 M.A. Philosophy, York University, 2004  
 B.A. Philosophy, York University, 2003, summa cum laude  
 B.R.S. Religious Studies, Tyndale University College

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Areas of Specialization: Ethics, Political Philosophy

Areas of Competence: History of Philosophy, Philosophy of Education

## DISSERTATION

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Dissertation Committee: Samantha Brennan (supervisor), John Thorp, Michael Milde

### *Critical Thinking and the Ethics of Teaching*

In the area of practical ethics, contemporary philosophers have been quick to study ethics in various professions such as medicine, law, business, and engineering. They have been slow, however, to turn this ethical spotlight on themselves and to the profession to which philosophers belong, that of educators in a university setting. To some extent, of course, the student-professor relationship is covered by a broad code of academic ethics, touching such matters as plagiarism, sexual harassment, unfairness, and so on. This code of academic ethics concerns what could be called the “easy cases,” for they are cases in which the actions in question are generally seen to be obviously wrong.

But these “easy cases” are not alone in possessing moral significance. More philosophically interesting are what can be called the “hard cases,” in which determining the morally justifiable course of action is complicated. How should teachers walk the fine line between being sensitive to students’ religious beliefs, and teaching critical thinking about religion? How should teachers handle sensitive issues in-class, such as sexual orientation, rape or abuse? What exactly does “desert” mean in

grading? Does good teaching require advocacy or neutrality of one's own beliefs? How should philosophy teachers respond to student relativism? These questions present themselves in particularly forceful ways in the undergraduate teaching of ethics, for the content of ethics courses is intimately connected to students' and teachers' conceptions of the good life, and to their conceptions of self. As well, the relationship between goodness and rationality has been a difficult issue for philosophers who have written about education, such as Plato, Locke and Rousseau. Each of these, in their efforts to educate reason and virtue, has privileged one at the expense of the other.

In order to address this question in the context of the undergraduate ethics classroom I have developed a framework for considering the issues involved in teaching ethics and for moral deliberation about teaching goals and practices. This framework is a capabilities approach to intellectual well-being that builds on the theory proposed, in the context of international development, by Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen. It is particularly well-suited to the teaching context for two main reasons. First, the capabilities approach allows for disagreements about the nature of the good life. More specifically, teachers on this view should not aim to make their students' lives good, but rather aim to enable students to make their own lives good. Second, the capabilities approach counts many things as good, such as health, intellectual development, and relationships. This plurality of goods makes room for a variety of possible goals in different types of classrooms. Even within the category of intellectual well-being there are many different goods at which to aim: the capacity to imagine, to feel, and to reason about matters practical and abstract. The result of these deliberations is a proposal for how an undergraduate ethics teacher should be guided in his or her teaching.

## RESEARCH

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### Publications

"Who May Live the Examined Life? Plato's Rejection of Socratic Practices in *Republic VII*." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, paper accepted; forthcoming.

### Papers in Progress

"Teaching Ethics and the Capabilities Approach to Well-Being"

"Moral Complexity in Philosophy Teaching"

"Public Reason and Religious Fundamentalism"

### Future Research Plans

In my post-doctoral research I will consider in a series of papers the ethical and political issues that arise from education at the primary and secondary level. Specifically, I will consider the public school context, and the practice of teaching students to think critically about their moral and religious beliefs. Do such practices violate the religious freedoms of parents? How does teaching critical thinking relate to teaching tolerance for others and for their views? Are such practices compatible with liberal neutrality? Pursuing this inquiry raises questions about the implications of liberal political theory,

but also about the responsibilities of individual teachers in the face of pressures from religious parents.

## AWARDS

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### Major Research Awards

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship, 2007-2008, \$20,000.
- Ontario Graduate Scholarship, 2005-2006, \$15,000.
- Ontario Graduate Scholarship, 2004-2005, \$15,000.
- Ontario Graduate Scholarship, 2003-2004, \$15,000

### Graduate Awards and Distinctions

- Mary Routledge Fellowship, The University of Western Ontario, March 2008, \$1,000; March 2007, \$1,000.
- Western Graduate Thesis Research Award, The University of Western Ontario, January 2008, \$1,000; January 2007, \$1,500.
- Harold Johnson Memorial Scholarship in Medieval Philosophy, The University of Western Ontario, December 2006, \$800.
- Area Comprehensive Exam passed with Distinction, The University of Western Ontario, May 2006.
- Canadian Society for the Study of Practical Ethics Graduate Student Essay Prize, Annual Congress, 2006, \$250.
- Major Research Paper passed with Distinction, York University, September 2004.
- Entrance Scholarship, York University, September 2003, \$3,000.

### Undergraduate Awards and Distinctions

- Vanier College Top Twenty-Two, York University, 2003.
- Continuing Student Scholarship, York University, 2002, \$1,500.
- Continuing Student Scholarship, York University 2001, \$1,500.
- Dean's List, York University, 2000-2003.
- Dean's List, Tyndale University College, 1998-2000.
- President's Scholarship, Tyndale University College, 1997, \$1,000.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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### Refereed Conferences

"Critical Thinking, Well-Being, and the Undergraduate Ethics Course," International Conference on Teaching Applied and Professional Ethics in Higher Education, Kingston University, Surrey, U.K., July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008.

“‘The Causes for Which Matrimony was Ordained:’ Sexuality and the End of Procreation,” Canadian Society for Christian Philosophers, Annual Meeting, University of Saskatchewan, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

“Plato, Socrates, and the Examined Life,” Canadian Philosophical Association, Annual Congress, University of Saskatchewan, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

“Is a Moderate View of Public Reason Possible?” Canadian Society for the Study of Practical Ethics, Annual Meeting, University of Saskatchewan, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

“‘The Causes for Which Matrimony was Ordained’: Sexuality and the End of Procreation,” Society of Christian Philosophers, Eastern Regional Meeting, Columbia, South Carolina, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

“Critical Thinking and the Duties of Philosophers as Ethics Teachers,” Society of Christian Philosophers, Midwest Regional Meeting, Dubuque, Iowa, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

“Critical Thinking and the Duties of Philosophers as Ethics Teachers,” Conference on New Philosophical Practices, UNESCO, Paris, November 16<sup>th</sup> 2006.

“Ethical Expertise and the Role of Military Chaplains,” Canadian Philosophical Association, Annual Congress, York University, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

“Moral Scepticism, Indoctrination, and the Duties of Philosophers as Ethics Teachers,” Canadian Society for the Study of Practical Ethics, Annual Meeting, York University, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

#### Non-Refereed Conferences and Invited Comments

“Teaching Ethics and the Capabilities Approach to Well Being,” Joint Sessions of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Society, University of East Anglia, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

“Comments on Philip Cook’s ‘The Just School,’” Society for Applied Philosophy, Annual Conference, University of Leeds, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

“Comments on Kristian Ekeli’s ‘Liberalism and Permissible Suppression of Illiberal Ideas,’” Society for Applied Philosophy, Annual Conference, University of Manchester, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

“Comments on Christopher Kaposy’s ‘An Ethical Argument for Improving Abortion Access,’” Canadian Philosophical Association, Annual Congress, University of Saskatchewan, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

“A Moderate Rawlsian View on Public Reason.” Philosophy Graduate Student Association Colloquium Series, The University of Western Ontario, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

“Comments on Philip Wiebe’s *God and Other Spirits*.” Canadian Society of Christian Philosophers, Annual Meeting, The University of Western Ontario, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005.

“Do Women Have An Obligation To Resist?” Feminist Ethics Colloquium, The University of Western Ontario, January 12<sup>th</sup> 2005.

#### OTHER RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

“UNESCO Conference Highlights Global Nature of Philosophical Practice,” *AAPT News*, 30:1 (2007), 13-14.

“Critical Thinking, Indoctrination, and the Duties of Philosophers as Ethics Teachers,” Poster Presentation for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Research Day, The University of Western Ontario, March 2007, 2008.

#### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

##### Huron University College – Visiting Assistant Professor, 2009-2010

PHIL 1250 – Right and Wrong

PHIL 2700 – Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory

PHIL 2801 – Contemporary Political Philosophy

PHIL 3720 – Normative Ethics

PHIL 4991 – Problems in Philosophy: Foundations of Political Liberalism

PHIL 4992 – Problems in Philosophy: Philosophy and Education

##### Tyndale University College – Adjunct Professor, 2008-2009

PHIL 3613 – Plato

PHIL 3413 – Philosophy and Film

##### The University of Western Ontario

###### *Course development (2008-2009)*

PHIL 2720 – The Ethics of Professional Relationships

PHIL 2200 – Introduction to Ancient Philosophy

PHIL 2740 – Ethics in Action (a service-learning course)

###### *Teaching*

PHIL 1300 – Introduction to Philosophy. Instructor, 2009

PHIL 020 – Introduction to Philosophy. Instructor, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007

###### *Teaching Assistantships*

PHIL 020 – Introduction to Philosophy. Head Tutorial Leader, 2007-2008

PHIL 020 – Introduction to Philosophy. Tutorial Leader, 2004-2005

## OTHER ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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Research Assistant, Teaching Support Centre, The University of Western Ontario, 2008

Research Assistant, York University, 2003-2004

Research Assistant, Tyndale Seminary, 2003

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

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Aristotelian Society

Society for Applied Philosophy

Canadian Philosophical Association

Canadian Society for the Study of Practical Ethics

American Philosophical Association

American Association of Philosophy Teachers

## GRADUATE COURSES TAKEN

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### Summer 2006

APA Graduate Teaching Seminar at the American Association of Philosophy Teachers'

International Conference on Teaching Philosophy

### 2005-2006 (The University of Western Ontario)

- Prospectus Course (Samantha Brennan)
- Re-Reasoning Ethics (Barry Hoffmaster)
- Constitutionalism and Democracy (Michael Milde)
- Independent Study on the Philosophy of Education (Samantha Brennan)

### 2004-2005 (The University of Western Ontario)

- Liberalism and Ideas of the Good (Michael Milde)
- Individual Responsibility in Collective Contexts (Tracy Isaacs)
- Research Seminar (William Harper)
- Plato's Republic and Ours (Patrick Maynard)
- Feminist Ethics (Tracy Isaacs)
- History of Political Philosophy (Jan Narveson)

### 2003 – 2004 (York University)

- Kant's Moral Philosophy (Esteve Morera)
- New Directions in Theory of Knowledge (Lorraine Code)
- Theories of Mind and Action (Kristin Andrews)
- Foundations in Practical Ethics (Wesley Cragg)
- Investigating the Mind (Evan Thompson)
- Directed Reading in Analytic Philosophy (Judy Pelham)

## REFERENCES

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Dr. Samantha Brennan  
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