

Scott R. Sehon

Curriculum Vitae

Joseph E. Merrill Professor of Philosophy
Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, 04011
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Education:

1994 Princeton University, Ph.D. in Philosophy.

Dissertation: "Action Explanation and the Nature of Mental States."

Supervisors: Mark Johnston, Harry Frankfurt

1986 Harvard University, A.B. in Philosophy, (*Magna cum laude*)

Faculty Appointments:

Fall 2022 – present Joseph E. Merrill Professor of Philosophy, Bowdoin College

Fall 2005 – Fall 2022 Professor, Bowdoin College

Fall 2014-Spring 2015 University College Freiburg, *Gastwissenschaftler*

Summer 2011 Harvard University, Summer School Instructor (Logic)

Fall 1999 – Spring 2005 Associate Professor, Bowdoin College

Fall 1994-Spring 1999 Assistant Professor, Bowdoin College

Publications:

Books:

Socialism: A Logical Introduction. 2024. Oxford University Press.

Free Will and Action Explanation: A Non-Causal, Compatibilist Account. 2016. Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by:

Haji, Ishtiyaque, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*

Simkulet, William, in *Metapsychology Online Reviews*

Baker, Derek, in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*

Alvarez, Maria, in *Ethics*

Corrado, Michael Louis, in *Criminal Justice Ethics*

Teleological Realism: Mind, Agency, and Explanation. 2005. MIT Press.

Reviewed by:

Ginet, Carl, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*
Price, Carolyn, in *The Philosophical Quarterly*
Slater, Carol, in *Psyche*
Worley, Sara, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*
Walden, Scott, in *Metapsychology Online Book Reviews*
Andrews, Kristin, in *Philosophy in Review*

Works in Progress:

Abortion Arguments: An Analytical Approach to the Debate (with Kristi Olson)

Mystery, Nihilism, and Magic.

“Whack-a-mole, Action, and Normativity: Korsgaard on Agency”

Articles

“[Is Socialism Viable? A Reply to David Gordon.](#)” February 21, 2024. *Mises Institute: Power & Market Blog.*

“[Sehon Responds on Socialism.](#)” October 25, 2023. *Bet On It.*

“[Is Redistribution Theft?](#)” February 5, 2021. *Pea Soup: Philosophy, Ethics, Academia.*

“[Two Problems with the Nonaggression Principle.](#)” *Mises Institute: Power & Market Blog.*

“[No, the Nazis Were Not Socialists.](#)” October 2020, *Jacobin.*

“Medical Reasoning and Doctor-Patient Communication,” July 2019, *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, co-authored with Donald Stanley.

“[Anti-Anti-Communism.](#)” *Aeon*, March 2017, co-authored with Kristen Ghodsee.

“Davidson’s Challenge to the Non-Causalist”, *American Philosophical Quarterly* (2016): 85-96, co-authored with Guido Löhrer.

“Epistemic Issues in the Free Will Debate: Can We Know When We Are Free?”, *Philosophical Studies* (2013): 363-380.

“Action Explanation and the Free Will Debate: How Incompatibilist Arguments Go Wrong.” *Philosophical Issues* (2012): 351-368.

“Taking Procrustes’ Axe to Professor Fisher’s Response,” *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, Volume 17 (2011): 1009-10, co-authored with Donald Stanley.

“A Flawed Conception of Determinism in the Consequence Argument,” *Analysis*, Volume 71 (2011): 30-38.

“Evidence and Simplicity: Why We Should Reject Homeopathy,” *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, Volume 16 (2010): 276-281.

“Applying the Simplicity Principle to Homeopathy: What Remains?” *Focus on Alternative and Complementary Therapies*, Volume 15:1 (2010).

“The Problem of Evil: Skeptical Theism Leads to Moral Paralysis,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion.* 67:2 (2010)

“Teleology and Degrees of Freedom,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, Volume 17:1 (2008): 123-144.

“[A philosophical analysis of the evidence-based medicine debate](#),” *BMC Health Services Research* 2003, 3:14. Co-authored with Donald E. Stanley. Also translated into Chinese and published in *Medicine and Philosophy* 25:2 (2004): 21-24 and 25:3 (2004): 30-33.

“An Argument Against the Causal Theory of Action Explanation,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 60:1(2000): 67-85.

“Connectionism and the Causal Theory of Action Explanation,” *Philosophical Psychology*, 11:4(1998): 511-531.

“Natural-Kind Terms and the Status of Folk Psychology,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 34:3(1997): 333-344.

“Deviant Causal Chains and the Irreducibility of Teleological Explanation,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 78:2 (1997): 195-213.

Translated into German as "Abweichende Kausalketten und die Irreduzibilität der teleologischen Erklärung" and published in *Gründe und Zwecke: Texte zur aktuellen Handlungstheorie*, Christoph Horn and Guido Löhrer, eds., Surhkamp Verlag (2010).

“Okin on Feminism and Rawls,” *The Philosophical Forum*, 27 (1996): 321-332.

“Teleology and the Nature of Mental States,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 31 (1994): 63-72.

Book Chapters and Reviews

“Agency, Functions, and Teleology,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Agency*, Luca Ferrero, editor. Routledge. (2022)

“Rationalizing Principles and Causal Explanation” (with Guido Löhrer), in *Explanation in Action Theory and Historiography: Causal and Teleological Approaches*, Gunnar Schumann, ed. Routledge. (2019)

“The Causal Theory of Action and the Commitments of Common Sense Psychology,” in *Reasons and Causes: Causalism and Non-causalism in the Philosophy of Action*, Giuseppina D’Oro, ed. Palgrave Macmillan (2013)

“Pro-Attitudes,” in *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Hugh LaFollette, John Deigh, and Sarah Stroud, eds. Wiley-Blackwell. (2013)

“Teleology,” in *Encyclopedia of the Mind*. Sage Publications. (2013)

Review of *Causing Human Actions: New Perspectives on the Causal Theory of Action*, Jesús Aguilar and Andrei Buckareff, (Eds.), *Ethics* 122:1(2011), pp. 168-174.

“Teleological Explanation,” in *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy of Action*, Timothy O’Connor and Constantine Sandis, eds. Blackwell. (2010).

“Dementors, Horcruxes, and Immortality: The Soul in *Harry Potter*,” in *Harry Potter and Philosophy: Hogwarts for Muggles*, William Irwin and Gregory Bassham, eds. Wiley (2010).

Review of *Rationality and the Good: Critical Essays on the Ethics and Epistemology of Robert Audi* Mark Timmons, John Greco, Alfred R. Mele (eds.) Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews, March 16, 2008, <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=12663>.

“Goal-Directed Action and Teleological Explanation,” in *Causation and Explanation*, Joseph Keim Campbell, Michael O’Rourke, and Harry Silverstein, eds. MIT Press. (2007)

Translated into German as "*Zielgerichtetes Handeln und teleologische Erklärungen*" and published in *Gründe und Zwecke: Texte zur aktuellen Handlungstheorie*, Christoph Horn and Guido Löhrer, eds., Surhkamp Verlag (2010).

Review of *A Most Unlikely God: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of God*, by Barry Miller, *Philosophy in Review*, 18:2 (1998): 129-131.

Review of *Logical Learning Theory: A Human Teleology and Its Empirical Support*, by Joseph F. Rychlak, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 46 (1996): 246-248.

Review of *Subjectivity and Reduction* by Barbara Hannan, *Canadian Philosophical Reviews*, 15 (1995): 250-252.

Newspaper op-eds

“Professors do much more than teach and advise,” *Bowdoin Orient*, October 11, 2012, (co-authored with Barbara Weiden Boyd, Kristen Ghodsee, Page Herrlinger, John Holt, Steve Naculich, and Steve Perkinson.)

“Job shortage, fraught future for students,” *Bowdoin Orient*, November 18, 2011 (co-authored with Kristen Ghodsee).

“Judging who’s fit to be tied” (op-ed on gay marriage), *Brunswick Times Record*, June 6, 2008.

"Filibuster Tactic Smacks of Hypocrisy," *Portland Press Herald*, April 25, 2005.

“Tax Cap Proponents’ Suggestion Would Create Free-Loaders,” *Brunswick Times Record*, October 8, 2004.

“Iraq not ‘War on Terror,’” *Brunswick Times Record*, March 26, 2004.

“Arguments Against Gay Marriage Don’t Hold Up,” *Brunswick Times Record*, February 27, 2004.

“Supports the Troops; Not Bush Decisions,” *Brunswick Times Record*, March 28, 2003.

“Rights not absolute,” *Brunswick Times Record*, October 31, 2001.

“There is no ban on school prayer,” *Brunswick Times Record*, September, 2001.

“Immorality of homosexuality based on Bible is challenged,” *Brunswick Times Record*, September 29, 2000.

“Homosexuality Is Not Immoral, Despite Scriptural Prohibition,” *Portland Press Herald*, June 27, 1997. Also reprinted in the Binghamton, NY *Press & Sun Bulletin*, August 14, 1997.

Other

Expert Report on the logical analysis of 18 U.S.C. §3553(f)(1), submitted to the United States District Court for the District of Idaho in USA v Marina Leahanne Adame. July, 2019.

RECENT TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Invited guest on the *Current Affairs* podcast with Nathan Robinson. March 2024.

“Socialism and Economic Democracy”

Invited presentation for the class, “Socialism: The Democratic Path,” taught by Mitchell Orenstein. March 21, 2024.

“Which is Better: Capitalism or Socialism?”

Debate with Bryan Caplan, hosted by Texas Christian University, October 16, 2023. (Audio recording available [here](#).)

"Acts, Actions, and Agency: Korsgaard on the Explanation of Action"

Delivered at Bochum, Germany conference on “The Value of Agency: Contemporary Views on Practical Normativity and Action-Theory.” September 2018.

“An Argument Against Moral Relativism” (with Guido Löhrer).

Delivered at the European Congress for Analytic Philosophy, Munich, Germany. August 2017.

“Radical translation and the principle of charity: a problem for Quine’s naturalism?”

Delivered at the meeting of the Society for the Study of the History of Analytic Philosophy, Calgary, Alberta. May 2017.

“Epistemology Naturalized, Relativism, and the Abyss”

Delivered at the meeting of the Society for Exact Philosophy, Calgary, Alberta, May 2017

“Teleology, Free Will, and Two Arguments for Incompatibilism”

Invited paper, University of Delaware, April, 2017

“Free Will: Addiction and Weakness of Will”

Invited paper, Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence in the Philosophy of the Social Science, June 2016.

“Rationalizing Principles and Causal Explanation” (with Guido Löhrer)

Invited paper at FernUniversität, Hagen, “Causalism and Anti-Causalism in Historical Explanations,” March 2016

“Moral Relativism and Disagreement” (with Guido Löhrer)

Invited paper, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, January 2016

“Davidson and Carnap: Naturalism, Relativism, and Nihilism”

Invited paper, University College Freiburg, July 2015

“Frege and Davidson: Logical Aliens and Interpretation”

Invited paper, Universität Erfurt, May 2015

Invited paper, University College Freiburg, May 2015

Society for the Study of the History of Analytic Philosophy, Dublin, June 2015

“Non-Causal Compatibilism”

Invited paper, Royal Institute for Philosophy, Keele University, October 2014.

Invited paper at the Workshop on Free Will, Metaphysics, and Science, University of Tennessee, April, 2014.

“Irreducible Teleology and Deviant Causal Chains,” Paper given at the Pacific Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association, April 2014.

“Davidson’s Challenge to the Non-causalist”, (with Guido Löhrer)

Invited paper at the Pacific Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association, March 2013.

World Philosophy Congress, Athens, Greece, August 2013.

Invited paper at “50 years of Actions, Reasons, and Causes,” Duisburg, Germany, September 2013.

“Deviant Causal Chains: Still a Problem for the Causal Theory of Action?”

Invited paper at Universität Erfurt, July 2012.

“Teleology and Free Will”

Invited paper at the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium conference on Aristotle and Philosophy of Action, March 2012.

“Epistemic Issues in the Free Will Debate: Can We Know When We Are Free?”

Bowdoin Conference on Free Will and Moral Responsibility, October 2011.

“Response to Liu on Responsibility and Choice,”

Pacific Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association, April 2011.

“What Does it Mean to Be Good?”

Invited presentation as part of the Veritas Forum at Bowdoin College, April 2011.

“The Problem of Evil and Moral Paralysis”

Invited talk at Boston University, January 10, 2011

“Franklin and the Problem of Enhanced Control”

American Philosophical Association Meetings, Pacific Division, April 1, 2010

“Free Will and Action Explanation: How Incompatibilist Arguments Go Wrong.”

Invited presentation at the Sociedad Filosófica Ibero Americana Conference on Philosophy of Action, Huatulco, Mexico, January 2010.

“Free Will and Action Explanation: Where the Consequence Argument Goes Wrong.”

Invited talk, University of Bonn, July, 2009

“Robots and Free Will”

University of Twente, Society for Philosophy and Technology, July 2009.

“Design, Evil, and Moral Paralysis”

Ian Ramsey Centre, St. Anne’s College, Oxford, July 2008.

“Précis of *Teleological Realism*” and “Reply to O’Connor, Stoutland, and Harman”

Author-meets-critics book session at the American Philosophical Association Meetings, Pacific Division, March, 2008

COURSES TAUGHT

Introductory

Philosophy of Religion
Early Modern Philosophy
Science, Non-science, and Nonsense
Relativism
Moral Problems
Truth and Morality
Free Will and Moral Responsibility
Socialism, Capitalism, and
Democracy

Intermediate

Philosophy of Mind
Philosophy of Language
Philosophy of Science
Logic
Advanced Logic
Philosophy of Law
Feminism and Liberalism
Agency

Senior Seminars

Free Will
Moral Psychology
Color and Consciousness
Reasons and Normativity
Science and God
Explanation
History of Analytic Philosophy
Wittgenstein

Quine and Davidson
Nihilism and Naturalism

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES

Referee for:

American Philosophical Quarterly
Australasian Journal of Philosophy
Canadian Journal of Philosophy
Dialogue
Dialectica
Diametros
Erkenntnis
Filozofia Nauki
Hastings Center Report
Inquiry
Journal for the History of Analytic Philosophy
Journal of Philosophy
Journal of Philosophical Research
Mind
MIT University Press

Nous
Pacific Philosophical Quarterly
Philosophia
Philosophical Imprint
Philosophical Psychology
Philosophical Quarterly
Philosophical Studies
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research
Polity Press
Synthese
Topoi

Organizer of the Bowdoin Conference on Free Will and Moral Responsibility, Fall 2011.

Member of the American Philosophical Association

Member of the Society for the Philosophy of Agency

HONORS AND AWARDS

Named to an endowed Chair, Bowdoin College, 2022

Faculty Leave Supplement Award, 2020

Faculty Research Award, Bowdoin College, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016

Faculty Travel Award, Bowdoin College, 2014.

Fletcher Family Research Fund, Bowdoin College, 2010

Fletcher Family Research Fund, Bowdoin College, 2009

Fletcher Family Research Fund, Bowdoin College, 2008

Faculty Leave Supplement Award, Bowdoin College, 2008-2009

Faculty Leave Supplement Award, Bowdoin College, 2002-2003

Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, Princeton University, 1992-1993

Mellon Fellowship Program, Princeton University, 1986-1988