

ELIZA WELLS

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Harvard University • Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics
124 Mount Auburn St, Suite 520N • Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Moral Philosophy (Theoretical and Applied) • Social and Political Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Philosophy of Technology • Feminist Philosophy • Philosophy of Religion

EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada 2025 -

Fellow-in-Residence, Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 2024 - 2025

EDUCATION

PhD in Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA 2024

Dissertation: "Just Doing My Job: Normative Dimensions of Social Roles"

Abstract: "What should I do?" Often, our answers reference our social roles as lawyers, citizens, or parents. But consider a would-be whistleblower, a wife challenging the gendered division of household labor, or the conflicted police officer Javert from *Les Misérables*. These agents feel there is a conflict between morality and the norms of their role. I argue that these are genuine normative conflicts. While many have attempted to explain role normativity in purely moral terms, I argue that social roles have distinctive value that can create good reasons to act immorally. Roles can also generate a form of exculpation that has been neglected by standard accounts of moral responsibility. While this may seem to let too many people off the moral hook, I conclude that role-occupants in fact have a moral responsibility to alter role norms that contribute to injustice.

Committee: Sally Haslanger (chair), Kieran Setiya, and Tamar Schapiro

MA in Religious Studies, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 2019

BA in Philosophy *with Distinction*, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 2019

Interdisciplinary Honors in Ethics in Society

Thesis: "Care, Individuals, and Institutions"

Advisor: Barry Maguire

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- “Social Roles and Exculpatory Ignorance” (R&R)
 - “The Normative Character of Social Roles”
 - “Role Participation in Structural Injustice”
 - “Social Philosophy for Tech Ethics Pedagogy” (with Sonia Maria Pavel)
 - “Social Roles and Corruption” (with Milan Mosse)
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OTHER EMPLOYMENT

- Co-Director**, MIT Experiential Ethics Program 2022 - 2023
Administratively ran program; developed expanded syllabus, lesson plans, and assignments; selected, trained, and supervised interdisciplinary teaching staff.
 - Assistant Director**, MIT Experiential Ethics Program 2021 - 2022
Participated in administration, course development, and training and advising teaching staff.
 - Co-Director**, Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI-Boston) 2021, 2022
Co-designed syllabus for week-long diversity institute of seminars, colloquia, and professional development workshops; selected participants; selected and trained teaching fellows; led sessions and participated in panels; coordinated logistics and administration.
 - Graduate Fellow**, Embedded EthiCS @ Harvard 2021 - 2022
Designed and taught ethics modules in computer science classes, working with philosophy and computer science faculty.
 - Graduate Teaching Fellow**, MIT Experiential Ethics 2021
Primary instructor for a small discussion group.
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AWARDS AND HONORS

- Graduate Woman of Excellence Honoree*, MIT 2023
Awarded biannually in recognition of leadership, service, dedication to mentorship, and drive to improve the student experience.
 - Presidential Fellowship for Graduate Studies*, MIT 2019
Funding for first year of doctoral studies.
 - Mothershead Prize for Outstanding Work in Moral and Political Philosophy*, Stanford 2019
Awarded to one graduating senior in Philosophy.
 - Phi Beta Kappa*, Stanford 2019
 - Major Grant*, Stanford 2018
Competitive grant for independent research funding.
 - Chappell Lougee Scholarship*, Stanford 2017
Competitive grant for independent research funding.
 - National Merit Scholarship* 2015
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TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS (*=refereed, † =invited)

The Normative Character of Social Roles	
† Ethics Institute Speaker Series, Northeastern University	2024
Caring Institutions and Structural Injustice	
Workshop on Care and Love, Harvard University	2024
Moral Ignorance is Not Moral Indifference	
*APA Eastern Division, Colloquium	2024
Role Responsibilities for Structural Injustice	
*New Approaches to Business Ethics (NABE) Workshop	2024
<i>Unable to deliver due to illness.</i>	
*APA Central Division, Colloquium	2024
*International Social Philosophy Conference	2023
*Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy	2023
Social Philosophy for Tech Ethics Pedagogy (with Sonia Maria Pavel)	
*teXne: Technology Ethics Exchange of the NorthEast	2023
Social Roles and Exculpatory Ignorance	
MITing of the Minds, with comments by Sam Berstler	2023
*Taking Responsibility Workshop at the René Descartes Lectures	2022
*Cambridge Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) International Conference	2022
*Vienna Forum for Analytic Philosophy (WFAP) Graduate Conference	2022
*Center for Ethics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs (CEPPA) Graduate Conference, with comments by Nick Kuespert	2022
Social Roles and Moral Psychology	
*Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy	2021

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

MIT Experiential Ethics (with Marion Boulicault, Sophie Gibert, and Sonia Pavel) 2022, 2023

TEACHING AT MIT

Feminist Thought, Sally Haslanger Spring 2023

Guest lecture: “Care Economics”

Bioethics, Robin Scheffler and Haley Schilling Fall 2022

Guest lecture: “Feminist (Bio) Ethics of Care”

Minds and Machines, E.J. Green Spring 2022

Guest lecture: “The Chinese Room”

Problems of Philosophy, Caspar Hare Fall 2021

Experiential Ethics (as teaching fellow) Summer 2021

Ethics, Tamar Schapiro Spring 2021

Philosophy of Religion, Jack Spencer Fall 2020

Guest lecture: “Religious Dissent”

TEACHING, continued**MODULES IN EMBEDDED ETHICS AT HARVARD**

“Hardware Backdoors and Responsibility.” <i>Computing Hardware</i> , Vijay Reddi	2022
“Designing Usable Programming Languages.” <i>Programming Languages</i> , Nada Amin	2022
“Thinking Responsibly about AI Systems.” <i>Artificial Intelligence</i> , Ariel Procaccia	2021
“Privacy and the Ethics of Client-Side Scanning.” <i>Cryptography</i> , Boaz Barak	2021
“Ethics of Language Encoding.” <i>Systems Programming and Machine Organization</i> , Eddie Kohler	2021

INVITED GUEST LECTURES

“Responsible Career Choices.” <i>Being, Thinking, and Doing: Ethics in Your Life</i> (MIT)	2022, 2023, 2024
“The Ethics of Care.” <i>Introduction to Moral Philosophy</i> , Barry Maguire (Stanford)	2019

PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

Kaufman Teaching Certificate Program, MIT	2023
Interactive workshop series focused on evidence-based teaching techniques. Topics included: designing a course, preparing a lesson plan, assessing and providing feedback to students, and creating an effective and welcoming classroom climate.	

SERVICE**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

<i>Co-organizer</i> , MIT Minorities in Philosophy (MAP)	2023 - 2024
<i>Co-director</i> , Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI-Boston)	2021, 2022
<i>First-Year Mentor</i> , MIT Philosophy	2021 - 2024
<i>Mentorship Events Organizer</i> , MIT Philosophy	2020 - 2022
<i>Graduate Representative to the Committee on Department Life</i> , MIT Philosophy	2020 - 2021

CONFERENCES AND ORGANIZING

<i>Co-organizer</i> , Conference on Love or Care as the Basis of Morality	2024
<i>Co-organizer</i> , Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy	2021, 2022, 2023
<i>Referee</i> , Harvard-MIT Graduate Conference	2022, 2023
<i>Organizer</i> , MIT Reading Groups (*=founder)	
*Feminist Philosophy	2023
*David Owens’ <i>Bound by Convention</i>	2023
*Philosophy & Literature	2021 - 2024
*Elizabeth Barnes’ <i>The Minority Body</i>	2021
Social, Historical, Aesthetic, Political, and Ethical Theory	2020 - 2022
<i>Graduate Representative to the Faculty</i> , MIT Philosophy	2020 - 2021
<i>Co-founder and president</i> , Stanford Practical Ethics Club and Ethics Bowl	2016 - 2019

WORK IN OTHER AREAS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

PUBLICATIONS (*=peer-reviewed; † =invited)

**“Weaned from Milk’: Agency and Authority in Francine Bennion’s ‘A Latter-day Saint Theology of Suffering’.” In *Latter-day Eloquence: Two Centuries of Mormon Oratory*, Ben Crosby and Isaac Richards (eds.). University of Illinois Press, forthcoming.

† “Feminist Ethics of Care as Latter-day Saint Ethics.” In *The Restoration of Latter-day Saint Thought: Essays on Mormon Philosophy, Theology, and Scripture*, Rosalynde Welch, Joseph Spencer, and Nathan B. Oman (eds.). University of Illinois Press, forthcoming.

**“Quoted at the Pulpit: Women and Authority in Fifty Years in General Conference.” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol 55, no. 4 (Winter 2022).

PRESENTATIONS (*=refereed)

Feminist Ethics of Care as Latter-day Saint Ethics

*LDS Philosophy Project Conference 2022

*LDS Philosophy Project Workshop 2021

SERVICE

Theology Feature Editor, Exponent II Magazine 2021 - present

REFERENCES

For confidential letters of recommendation, please reach out to Christine Grabam (cgrabam@mit.edu).

Sally Haslanger • shaslang@mit.edu • Ford Professor of Philosophy and Women’s and Gender Studies • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

Kieran Setiya • ksetiya@mit.edu • Professor • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

Tamar Schapiro • tamschap@mit.edu • Professor • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

Sam Berstler • berstler@mit.edu • Assistant Professor • MIT Department of Linguistics and Philosophy

E.J. Green (teaching) • egreen77@jh.edu • Miller Associate Professor • William H. Miller III Department of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University