

# ELIZA WELLS

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## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

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

## AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Philosophy of Technology • Feminist Philosophy • Philosophy of Religion

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## 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

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## 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

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## WORKS IN PROGRESS

"Social Roles and Exculpatory Ignorance" (R&R)

"The Normative Character of Social Roles"

"Role Responsibility for Structural Injustice"

**WORKS IN PROGRESS, continued**

“Social Philosophy for Tech Ethics Pedagogy” (with Sonia Maria Pavel)

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**OTHER EMPLOYMENT**

<b>Co-Director</b> , MIT Experiential Ethics Program Administratively ran program; developed expanded syllabus, lesson plans, and assignments; selected, trained, and supervised interdisciplinary teaching staff.	2022 - 2023
<b>Assistant Director</b> , MIT Experiential Ethics Program Participated in administration, course development, and training and advising teaching staff.	2021 - 2022
<b>Co-Director</b> , Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI-Boston) 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.	2021, 2022
<b>Graduate Fellow</b> , Embedded EthiCS @ Harvard Designed and taught ethics modules in computer science classes, working with philosophy and computer science faculty.	2021 - 2022
<b>Graduate Teaching Fellow</b> , MIT Experiential Ethics Primary instructor for a small discussion group.	2021

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**AWARDS AND HONORS**

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

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**TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS** (\*=refereed, † =invited)

<b>The Normative Character of Social Roles</b> † Ethics Institute Speaker Series, Northeastern University	<i>scheduled for 2024</i>
<b>Moral Ignorance is Not Moral Indifference</b> *APA Eastern Division, Colloquium	2024

**TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS, continued****Role Responsibilities for Structural Injustice**

- \*New Approaches to Business Ethics (NABE) Workshop 2024  
*Unable to deliver due to illness.*
- \*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, 2022  
 with comments by Nick Kuespert

**Social Roles and Moral Psychology**

- \*Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy 2021

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE****COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

- MIT Experiential Ethics* (with Marion Boulicault and Sonia Maria Pavel) 2022 - 2023
- MIT Experiential Ethics* (with Marion Boulicault and Sophie Gibert) 2021 - 2022

**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”

**MODULES IN EMBEDDED ETHICS AT HARVARD**

- “Hardware Backdoors and Responsibility.” *Computing Hardware*, Vijay Reddi 2022
- “Designing Usable Programming Languages.” *Programming Languages*, Nada Amin 2022
- “Thinking Responsibly about AI Systems.” *Artificial Intelligence*, Ariel Procaccia 2021
- “Privacy and the Ethics of Client-Side Scanning.” *Cryptography*, Boaz Barak 2021

**TEACHING, continued**

“Ethics of Language Encoding.” *Systems Programming and Machine Organization*,  
Eddie Kohler 2021

**INVITED GUEST LECTURES**

“Responsible Career Choices.” *Being, Thinking, and Doing: Ethics in Your Life*, Anni  
Raty (MIT) 2023

“Career Ethics: Hard Choices and Responsibility.” *Being, Thinking, and Doing: Ethics  
in Your Life*, Thomas Byrne (MIT) 2022

“The Ethics of Care.” *Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, 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**

*Co-organizer*, MIT Minorities in Philosophy (MAP) 2023 - 2024

*Co-director*, Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI-Boston) 2021, 2022

*First-Year Mentor*, MIT Philosophy 2021 - 2024

*Mentorship Events Organizer*, MIT Philosophy 2020 - 2022

*Graduate Representative to the Committee on Department Life*, MIT Philosophy 2020 - 2021

**CONFERENCES AND ORGANIZING**

*Co-organizer*, Conference on Love or Care as the Basis of Morality *scheduled for 2024*

*Co-organizer*, Michigan-MIT Graduate Workshop in Social Philosophy 2021, 2022, 2023

*Referee*, Harvard-MIT Graduate Conference 2022, 2023

*Organizer*, MIT Reading Groups (\*=founder)

\*Feminist Philosophy 2023

\*David Owens’ *Bound by Convention* 2023

\*Philosophy & Literature 2021 - present

\*Elizabeth Barnes’ *The Minority Body* 2021

Social, Historical, Aesthetic, Political, and Ethical Theory 2020 - 2022

*Graduate Representative to the Faculty*, MIT Philosophy 2020 - 2021

*Co-founder and president*, 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

### EMPLOYMENT IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

*Computation Summer Scholar*, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, CA 2016

*Data Visualization Research Assistant*, Center for Spatial & Textual Analysis, Stanford, CA 2015 - 2016

*Software Development Intern*, Ender Labs, Salt Lake City, UT 2015

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## REFERENCES

*For confidential letters of recommendation, please reach out to Christine Graham (cgraham@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