

JASON BRENNAN
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2008 – Present	Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Research Brown University
2006 – 2008	Research Fellow, The Political Theory Project Brown University

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophy, University of Arizona, 2002 - 2007
Dissertation: *The Best Moral Theory Ever: The Merits and Methods of Moral Theory*
Committee: David Schmidtz (chair), Mark Timmons, Michael Gill

M.A. Philosophy, University of Arizona, 2005

B.A. Philosophy, University of New Hampshire, December 2001

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Social and Political Philosophy, Normative Ethics, Metaethics
Research interests: voting ethics, political liberty, democratic theory, civic virtue, the intersection of politics, philosophy and economics, ideal and non-ideal theory, the purpose of moral and political philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Applied Ethics, History of Modern Philosophy, Philosophy of Science

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2011 *The Ethics of Voting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), in press.

From the jacket:

Nothing is more integral to democracy than voting. Most people believe that every citizen has the civic duty or moral obligation to vote, that any sincere vote is morally acceptable, and that buying, selling, or trading votes is inherently wrong. In this provocative book, Jason Brennan challenges our fundamental assumptions about voting, revealing why it is not a duty for most citizens—in fact, he argues, many people owe it to the rest of us *not* to vote. Bad choices at the polls can result in unjust laws, needless wars, and calamitous economic policies. Brennan shows why voters have duties to make informed decisions in the voting booth, to base their decisions on sound evidence for what will create the best possible policies, and to

promote the common good rather than their own self-interest. They must vote well—or not vote at all. Brennan explains why voting is not necessarily the best way for citizens to exercise their civic duty, and why some citizens need to stay away from the polls to protect the democratic process from their uninformed, irrational, or immoral votes. In a democracy, every citizen has the right to vote. This book reveals why sometimes it's best if they don't.

2010 *A Brief History of Liberty* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell), with David Schmidtz.

From the jacket:

Through a fusion of philosophical, social scientific, and historical methods, *A Brief History of Liberty* provides a comprehensive, philosophically-informed portrait of the elusive nature of one of our most cherished ideals.

- Offers a succinct yet thorough survey of personal freedom
- Explores the true meaning of liberty, drawing philosophical lessons about liberty from history
- Considers the writings of key historical figures from Socrates and Erasmus to Hobbes, Locke, Marx, and Adam Smith
- Combines philosophical rigor with social scientific analysis
- Argues that liberty refers to a range of related but specific ideas rather than limiting the concept to one definition

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

- 2011 “Condorcet’s Jury Theorem and the Optimal Number of Voters.” *Politics* 31:1.
- 2010 “Scepticism about Philosophy.” *Ratio* 23, 1-16.
- 2009 “Polluting the Polls: When Citizens Should Not Vote.” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 87:4, 535-549.
- 2009 “Tuck on the Rationality of Voting.” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 3:3. 1-5.
- 2008 “Beyond the Bottom Line: The Theoretical Goals of Moral Theorizing.” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 28: 277-296.
- 2008 “What if Kant Had Had a Cognitive Theory of the Emotions?” In Valerio Rohden, et al (eds.), *Recht und Freiden in der Philosophie Kants: Akten des X. Internationalen Kants-Kongresses* (Berlin: De Gruyter), 219-228.
- 2007 “Modesty without Illusion.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 75: 111-128.
- 2007 “Free Will in the Block Universe.” *Philosophia* 35: 207-217.
- 2007 “Dominating Nature.” *Environmental Values* 16: 513-528.
- 2007 “Rawls’s Paradox.” *Constitutional Political Economy* 18: 287-299.
- 2005 “Choice and Excellence: A Defense of Millian Individualism.” *Social Theory and Practice* 31: 483-498.
- 2004 “Illiberal Liberals.” *Review Journal of Political Philosophy* 2: 59-103.
Translated into Turkish and reprinted in *Liberal Düşünce [The Journal of Liberal Thought]* 15 (2010), 61-89.

Invited Articles and Book Chapters

- 2012 “Classical Liberalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook in Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. David Estlund. New York: Oxford University Press, co-authored with John Tomasi.
- 2011 “Political Liberty: Who Needs It?” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 29:1.

Book Reviews

- 2006 “The Experience of Freedom.” Invited review of C. Fred Alford, *Rethinking Freedom* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), in *Review of Politics* 68: 687-689.

Reference

- 2010 “Liberty and Freedom.” Invited entry in *Political and Civic Leadership*, ed. Richard A. Couto (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing).
- 2010 “Liberty.” Invited entry in *The Encyclopedia of Political Theory*, ed. Simon Caney (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing).
- 2006 “Marijuana.” In *Social Issues in America*, ed. James Ciment (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe), 1044-1054.

CURRENT RESEARCH

Having finished *The Ethics of Voting*, I am now working on *The Politics of Voting*. I argue that the political liberties are typically not of much value to the people that hold them. Both epistocracy and democracy can be *just*, if not *ideal*, in principle, but neither is likely to be just in practice. Deciding between the two involves asking both which is the least intrinsically unjust in practice and which will tend to produce better outcomes. I challenge arguments claiming that the political liberties must be distributed equally as a matter of basic justice. Finally, I argue that mandatory voting laws are unjust, unnecessary, and potentially harmful.

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2008 Earhart Grant, \$15000, to complete *A Brief History of Liberty*
- 2006 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper, *American Philosophical Association*, Pacific Division.
- 2005 *International Society for Utilitarian Studies* Best Graduate Student Paper.
- 2005 William H. Fink Award (judged most outstanding student over graduate career by philosophy faculty).

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- 2011 “Liberal Tensions”, Invited lecture and debate, *Association for Liberal Thinking*, Ankara, Turkey, May 14.
- 2011 Author-Meets-Critic session on *The Ethics of Voting*, with replies to my critics (Colin MacLeod, Alistair Norcross, and Robert Talisse), Pacific APA, San Diego, CA, April 21.
- 2010 “Political Liberty: Who Needs It?” Invited talk, *Social Philosophy and Policy Center*, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, Nov. 5.

- 2010 “When Citizens Should Not Vote.” Invited talk, Australian National University, Research School of the Social Sciences. Canberra, Australia. August 25.
- 2010 “Responsible Voting.” Invited talk, *Center for American Studies* conference on civic virtue, Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA, Feb. 4. Expected to be published in an anthology later.
- 2010 “Does Empirical Psychology Vindicate Utilitarianism?” *American Philosophical Association*, Central Division, Chicago, IL, Feb. 18.
- 2009 “Civic Virtue without Politics.” *New England Political Science Association*, Portland, ME, May 8.
- 2009 “Civic Virtue without Politics.” Invited symposium on civic virtue, *American Philosophical Association*, Pacific Division, Vancouver, BC, April 8.
- 2009 “Civic Virtue without Politics.” *Midwest Political Science Association*, Chicago, IL, April 3.
- 2008 “Fighting over ‘Freedom.’” Invited panel on freedom, *New England Political Science Association*, Providence, RI, April 24.
- 2008 Invited participant, roundtable on *Private Property, Taxation, and Justice*, Program in Political Philosophy, Policy, and Law, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, March 12-14.
- 2008 “Pluralism about Moral Theories.” *Current Research Workshop*, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, January 4.
- 2007 “The Social Contract as a Framework for Entrepreneurship.” Invited talk, Oxford University, Oxford, UK, April 19.
- 2007 “Positive Liberty and Economic Freedom.” Invited talk, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, March 2.
- 2007 “Philosophical Dissensus.” University of Maryland, College Park, MD, February 9.
- 2007 “Philosophical Dissensus.” College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, February 2.
- 2007 “Modesty without Illusion.” College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, February 2.
- 2007 “Philosophical Dissensus.” Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, January 26.
- 2006 “Theory Multiplism.” University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, October 20.
- 2006 “On Behalf of Moral Principles.” *American Philosophical Association*, Pacific Division (colloquium paper), Portland, OR, March 24.
- 2005 “What If Kant Had Had a Cognitive Theory of the Emotions?” *10th International Kant Congress*, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, September 5.
- 2005 “The Vices of the Virtues of Ignorance.” *International Society for Utilitarian Studies*, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, August 11.
- 2005 “Free Will in the Block Universe.” *Society for Exact Philosophy*, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, May 20.
- 2005 “Rawls' Paradox.” *North Texas Philosophical Association*, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, April 23.

POPULAR MEDIA

- 2010 “Conceptions of Freedom”, lead essay in online debate on liberty, hosted at Cato Unbound, with Phillip Pettit, John Christman, and Tom Palmer as respondents.
- 2009 Bloggingheads.TV discussion on “Civic Virtue”, with Richard Dagger.
- 2008 *Radio Netherlands* Interview on “Polluting the Polls”, broadcasted October 30.
- 2008 *The Guardian* Politics Interview and Podcast on “When Citizens Should Not Vote”, conducted October 21, broadcasted October 23 .
- 2008 Bloggingheads.TV discussion on “In Defense of Not Voting”, with Will Wilkinson.

Contributor to *PEA Soup* and *Public Reason* blogs.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate level, at Brown University

- 2009 Civic Virtue and the Duties of Citizens (Seminar).

Undergraduate level, at Brown University

- 2011 Moral Philosophy (Mid-level lecture)
- 2011 Prosperity: The Ethics and Economics of Wealth Creation (Advanced Lecture), with John Tomasi (political science) and Bill English (economics).
- 2010 History of Moral Philosophy: The British Moralists (Advanced Lecture)
- 2010 Prosperity: The Ethics and Economics of Wealth Creation (Advanced Lecture), with John Tomasi (political science) and Mark Koyama (economics).
- 2010 Reason and Religion (Introductory Lecture)
- 2009 Environmental Ethics (Mid-level Lecture)
- 2008 Moral Philosophy (Mid-Level Lecture).
- 2008 Environmental Ethics (Mid-level Lecture).
- 2007 Freedom (First Year Seminar).
- 2007 Moral Metatheory (Senior Research Seminar).
- 2006 Freedom (First Year Seminar).

Independent Studies and Tutorials Supervised, at Brown University

- 2010 Political Liberalism
- 2010 Self-interest and Morality
- 2009 Social Contract Theories
- 2009 Constructivism in Metaethics and Political Theory
- 2009 Voting Ethics
- 2007 Political Economy

Undergraduate level, at the University of Arizona

- 2006 Philosophy of Freedom (Upper Level Lecture).
- 2004 Business Ethics (Upper Level Lecture).
- 2004 Philosophy of Freedom (Upper Level Lecture).
- 2003 Ancient Philosophy (Mid-Level Lecture).

Courses Assisted:

- 2003 Introductory Philosophy of Science, with Shaughan Lavine, University of Arizona.
 2003 Introductory Philosophy of Mind, with David Chalmers, University of Arizona.
 2002 Introductory Metaphysics, with Laurie Paul, University of Arizona.
 2002 Ethics (Seminar), with Stephen Bero, Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth.
 2001 Beginning Logic, with Jen Armstrong, University of New Hampshire.
 2001 Introduction to Logic (Seminar), with Douglas Webb, Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE

Occasional Referee, *Ethics, The Australasian Journal of Philosophy, Philosophical Studies, Philosophical Quarterly, Politics, Philosophy, and Economics, Social Theory and Practice, Political Studies, The Journal of Value Inquiry*, Routledge Press, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Politics*.

DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- 2010 Lectured on “Animal Rights and Equality”, to RI Minimal Security inmates taking an environmental studies course sponsored by Brown University.
 2009 Presented “Civic Virtue without Politics” to Brown undergraduate philosophy club.
 2009 Developed curriculum and pedagogical mission statement of the Political Theory Project
 2008 Second reader on senior thesis titled “Green Political Liberalism”.
 2008 Judge, Brown Debating Union Hicks Award Competition, April 8.
 2008 Presented “Should Some People Not Vote?” to Janus Forum (undergraduate political club), Brown University, Feb. 28.
 2007 Presented “Is Philosophy a Mistake?” to Janus Forum (undergraduate political club), Brown University, Feb. 22.
 2005 Graduate Student Representative to the Faculty, Department of Philosophy, University of Arizona.

REFERENCES

Richard Arneson, Professor of Philosophy
 Department of Philosophy, University of California, San Diego, CA 92093
 (858) 534-6810 rarneson@ucsd.edu

Geoffrey Brennan, Professor of Philosophy, Australian National University
 Distinguished Research Professor, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
 Professor of Political Science, Duke University
 Philosophy Program, Research School of the Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia, 0200.
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David Estlund, Lombardo Family Professor of Philosophy, Professor of Political Science

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David Schmidtz, Kendrick Professor of Philosophy, Professor of Economics

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John Tomasi, Associate Professor of Political Science, Director of the Political Theory
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