

Scott R. Sehon

Professor of Philosophy
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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*)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Areas of Specialization:

- Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics

Areas of Competence:

- Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Language, Logic, Philosophy of Law, History of Modern Philosophy, History of Analytic Philosophy, Ethics, Political and Social Philosophy

PUBLICATIONS

Works in Progress:

Goals, Agency, and Free Will. Book manuscript in progress.

"Evidence and simplicity: Why we should reject homeopathy," co-authored with Donald Stanley. Under review.

"Action Explanation and the Free Will Debate." In progress.

Book:

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*

Journal Articles

“The Problem of Evil: Skeptical Theism Leads to Moral Paralysis,” forthcoming in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*.

“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, (available at <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6963/3/14>). 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.

“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

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

“Dementors, Horcruxes, and Immortality: The Soul in *Harry Potter*,” forthcoming in *Harry Potter and Philosophy: Hogwarts for Muggles*, Gregory Bassham and David Bagget, eds. Blackwell.

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)

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

“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.

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

“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

“Action Explanation and the Free Will Debate”

Invited talk, University of New Mexico, March, 2007

Northern New England Philosophical Association Conference, October, 2006

Invited talk, Auburn University, September, 2006

“The Problem of Evil and Moral Paralysis,”

University of Wisconsin, Conference in Honor of Keith Yandell, September, 2005

"Truth and Relativism"

Convocation Address at Bowdoin College, August, 2005.

“The Problem of Evil and the Existence of God”

- Invited talk, Bowdoin College, June, 2005.
Bowdoin College (Faculty Seminar series), March, 2004.
- “Goal-Directed Action and Teleological Explanation”
Invited talk, Inland Northwest Philosophy Conference on Explanation and Causation. May, 2003.
Maine Philosophical Institute, April, 2003
- “Non-motivating Reasons for Action”
American Philosophical Association meetings, Pacific Division, March, 2003.
- “Comments on Edward Pols’s ‘The Complexity of Causality’.”
Invited talk, Bowdoin College, Colloquium in honor of Edward Pols, April, 2001.
- “*Flatland* and the Existence of God”
Invited talk, Bowdoin College, April, 1998.
- “Deviant Causal Chains and the Irreducibility of Teleological Explanation”
Northern New England Philosophical Association convention, October, 1996.
- “Okin on Feminism and Rawls”
American Philosophical Association meetings, Pacific Division, April, 1996.
- “Teleological Explanation and Agency”
Atlantic Philosopher’s Conference, October, 1995
Northern New England Philosophical Association convention, October, 1995.
- “Teleology and Normativity,”
Invited talk, Bates College, May, 1994.
- “Hypothetical Imperatives and Normativity”
Maine Philosophical Institute, April, 1994.
- “Teleology and the Humean Theory of Motivation”
Northern New England Philosophical Association convention, October 1993.

COURSES TAUGHT

Introductory

Philosophy of Religion
History of Modern Philosophy
Science, Non-science, and Nonsense
Relativism
Moral Problems

Intermediate

Philosophy of Mind
Philosophy of Language
Logic
Intermediate Logic
Philosophy of Law
Feminism and Liberalism
Agency

Senior Seminars

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

Wittgenstein
Quine and Davidson

COLLEGE SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES

College Committee Service:

Curriculum and Educational Priorities
Research Oversight Committee
Committee on Teaching (Chair)
Working Group on Numeracy
Working Group on General Education Requirements (Chair)
Sexual Misconduct Board (Chair)
Off-Campus Study
Judicial Board
Library Committee (Chair)
Faculty Parliamentarian
Faculty Clerk

Other Service:

Philosophy Department Chair (three years)
Organizer and panelist, *Faith, Reason and Evolution: A Public Colloquium*. Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, October 23, November 7 and 14, 2008.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES

Referee for: MIT University Press
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research
Philosophical Studies
Philosophical Quarterly
Pacific Philosophical Quarterly
Journal of Philosophical Research
Inquiry
Dialogue
Hastings Center Report

Co-President of the Northern New England Philosophical Association, 1995-1996

SENIOR THESES SUPERVISED

Brent Beecher, "Personal Identity: An Inquiry into the Criteria of Survival"

Andrew Zink, "A Behaviorists Account of Meaning: W.V.O. Quine on the Indeterminacy of Translation"

Ted Sears, "Incommensurability and Untranslatability: an Examination of Incommensurability in the works of Thomas Kuhn"

Melissa Braveman, "Gödel and Penrose: the Implications of the Incompleteness of Arithmetic for Artificial Intelligence"

Carl Findley, "After the Implosion: on How to Read Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*"

Sam Arnold, "An Examination of Michael Ruse's Darwinian Approach to Philosophy"

HONORS AND AWARDS

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, 1992-1992

Mellon Fellowship Program, Princeton University, 1986-1988