

# Spencer Case

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## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Meta-ethics, normative ethics, and political philosophy

## AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Applied ethics, bioethics, philosophy of religion, epistemology, social and political philosophy, Arab-Islamic philosophy, military ethics, comparative religion

## ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Assistant teaching professor, Bowling Green State University (fall 2023–present)  
Research fellow, Sentience Institute (spring 2023–present)  
Johns Hopkins Center For Talented Youth (summer 2018, summer 2024)  
Philosophy lecturer, University of Colorado Boulder (fall 2021–spring 2023)  
International research fellow, Wuhan University (fall 2019–spring 2022)  
Philosophy lecturer, University of Colorado Boulder (fall 2018–spring 2019)  
Graduate part-time teaching instructor, University of Colorado Boulder (spring 2016–fall 2017)  
Teaching assistant, University of Colorado Boulder (fall 2011, fall 2014–fall 2015)

## EDUCATION

University of Colorado Boulder, Ph.D., Philosophy, 2018  
Dissertation: *From Epistemic to Moral Realism: A Defense of Ethical Truth*  
Committee: Graham Oddie (director), Chris Heathwood, Alastair Norcross, Michael Huemer, Terence Cuneo (outside committee member)  
University of Colorado Boulder, MA, Philosophy, 2012  
Idaho State University, BA, Philosophy, 2009

## OTHER TITLES

Research fellow, Sentience Institute (2023–present)  
Editor, *1000 Word Philosophy* (2024–present)

## RESEARCH

*Peer-reviewed publications in academic journals*

2024. “Holocaust perpetrators and unjust combatants,” *Journal of Controversial Ideas*.  
2022. “The limits of identity: running Tuvel’s argument the other way,” *Journal of Controversial Ideas*. 2(2): 1–21. Originally published under the name of K. Whittaker.  
2021. “Political conviction and epistemic injustice,” *Philosophia* 49(1): 197–216.  
2020. “Moral extremism,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 38(4): 615–629. Online at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/japp.12488>.

2020. “Small evils and live options: a new strategy against the argument from evil,” *Philosophia Christi* 22(2): 307–321.
2020. “The normative error theorist cannot avoid self-defeat,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 98(1): 92–104.
2019. “From epistemic to moral realism,” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 16(5): 541–562.  
Highlighted in the *PEA (Philosophy, Ethics Academia) Soup Blog* with critical comments from David Enoch, a short response from me, a discussion on February 15–16, 2019.  
<http://peasoup.us/2019/02/jmp-discussion-of-spencer-cases-from-epistemic-to-moral-realism/>
2017. “A limited defense of the Kalam cosmological argument,” *Res Philosophica* 94(1): 165–75.
2016. “Normative pluralism worthy of the name is false,” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 11: 1–19.
2016. “Rethinking demandingness: why scalar consequentialism and satisficing consequentialism are not less demanding than maximizing consequentialism,” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 10: 1–7.

#### *Articles in Anthologies*

2019. “White privilege: a conservative perspective” and “Reply to Dan Lowe” in *Ethics, Left and Right: The Moral Issues that Divide Us*, ed. Robert Fischer (OUP).

#### *Selected Book Reviews*

- (in progress) *Answering Moral Skepticism* by Shelly Kagan, *Journal of Moral Philosophy*.
2022. *The Ethics of Microaggression* by Regina Rini, *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 19(4): 427–430.
2022. *The Nature of Desert Claims: Rethinking What it Means to Get One’s Due* by Kevin Kinghorn, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*.
2021. *A Cure for Darkness: The Story of Depression and How we Treat it* by Alex Riley, *Washington Examiner*.
2020. *Grandstanding: The Use and Abuse of Moral Talk* by Justin Tosi and Brandon Warmke, *National Review*, August 24, 2024.
2020. *Morality and Epistemic Judgment* by Christopher Cowie, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (coauthored with Terence Cuneo).
2015. *Gratitude toward Veterans: Why Americans Should Not Be Very Grateful to Veterans* by Stephen Kershner, *Journal of Military Ethics* 14: 197–199.
2015. *Speech and Morality: On the Metaethical Implications of Speaking*, by Terence Cuneo, *Tradition and Discovery* 42: 59–62.

#### *Books*

- Is Morality Real? A Debate*. 2023. Coauthored with Matt Lutz. (Routledge; series editor Tyrone Goldschmidt).

We often say that actions like murder and institutions like slavery are morally wrong. Sometimes people strenuously disagree about the moral status of actions, as with abortion. But what, if anything, makes statements about morality true? Are there objective moral facts, or is morality (in some sense) just a matter of opinion? That is, should we be realists about morality, or not? In this book, Spencer Case and Matt Lutz introduce the moral realism debate and outline the major contemporary positions in metaethics. They then argue for

their preferred views, responding to each other in two rounds. Case contends that there are moral truths that don't depend on human beliefs or attitudes. Lutz contends that that no moral statements are true, and even if some moral statements were true, we wouldn't be able to know it. Along the way, they explore topics like the nature of common sense, the meaning of moral language, and why the realism debate matters. The authors develop original arguments and responses but assume no prior knowledge of metaethics. This book is sure to give food for thought to students and seasoned philosophers alike.

*Why It's Ok to Be Patriotic.* (In progress). Advance contract with Routledge, editor Andrew Beck, part of the “Why it's ok” series.

In this book, Spencer Case offers a defense of patriotism—a sense of loyalty and affection towards one's own country. Critics of patriotism characterize it as a divisive and exclusionary force in human life; Case replies that national loyalties allow people to transcend more parochial identities, and to create novel cultural achievements. He distinguishes between a kind of reflective, affirmative patriotism—expressed, for example, in the essays of George Orwell—and the extreme forms of nationalism that can be plausibly blamed for atrocities. Drawing on work from several subjects, including history, philosophy, and sociology, he argues that enlightened patriotism, far from impeding progress, is instrumental to it.

*Front Line Philosophy* (In progress). Anthology co-edited with Mark Zélcèr and Jesse Hamilton. Forward to be written by Michael Walzer. Fourteen agreed contributors have submitted titles and abstracts.

*Front Line Philosophy* considers a wide range of topics, including the nature of service, the relationship between military service and other aspects of society, and topics of philosophical interest, articulated through the lens of military service. The contributions leverage first-hand experiences from military service to make philosophically interesting points. We have taken care to include a diverse group of military veterans. This volume's contributors include men and women, volunteers and conscripts, officers and enlisted, representing five countries (U.S., Singapore, Israel, U.K, and Netherlands), across all major service branches (i.e., Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force), having served in a wide range of military specialties (e.g., infantry, artillery, transportation, civil affairs, judge advocate, etc.) This will be the first book of its kind. No similar anthology collects original writing from multiple living philosophers about their military experience.

Articles at *1,000 Word Philosophy* website (edited by Nathan Nobis)

“Because God Says So: On Divine Command Theory”

“Take My Word for It: On Testimony”

“Plato's *Crito*: When should we break the law?” (Adapted into an illustrated video by “Train of Thoughts” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhLyMrHZJ0s&t=1s>>).

“Is it Wrong To Believe Without Sufficient Evidence? W.K. Clifford on the Ethics of Belief”

“Why be Moral? Plato's ‘Ring of Gyges’ Thought Experiment”

“Ursula Le Guin's ‘The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas’: Would You Walk Away?”

“Plato's Allegory of the Cave: The Journey out of Ignorance” (Adapted into an illustrated video by “Train of Thoughts” <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcF6b3doA2s&t=1s>>).

## PAPERS IN PROGRESS

- “Self-defeat reconsidered: Reply Khuramy and Schulz”
- “Epistemic Moralism”
- “What’s Bad About Bad Faith Arguments?” with Rob Gressis
- “The Meta-Ethical Implications of Epistemic Value”

## ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- “Holocaust perpetrators and unjust combatants” University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, May 9, 2024.
- “An epistemic defense of patriotism” Heterodox philosophy workshop, Boulder, Colorado, April 20, 2024.
- “A foothold for moral realists” University of Colorado Boulder Philosophy Department Center Talk, January 20, 2023.
- “Laying siege to Stalingrad versus standing guard at Auschwitz: What’s the moral difference?” for Wuhan University School of Philosophy, Wuhan, China, October 20, 2022.
- “Genocide and the moral standing of unjust combatants” at Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 12, 2022 (online session).
- “Moral extremism and why it matters” for Lee Jussim’s psychology seminar at Rutgers University, May 6, 2021.
- “Small evils and live options: A new response to the argument from evil” for Iskra Fileva’s philosophy of religion class, University of Colorado, Boulder, April 26, 2021.
- “Epistemology as ethics of belief: A response to the ‘trivial truths’ argument” Lingnan University, March 5, 2021.
- “Small evils and live options: a consequentialist response to the Evidential Argument from Evil” University of Colorado Boulder Center for Values and Social Policy October 16, 2020.
- “Moral extremism as a vice,” Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado Boulder August 16, 2020.
- “White privilege,” University of Minnesota Morris philosophy discussion group, July 15, 2020.
- “Small evils and live options: a consequentialist response to the Evidential Argument from Evil” Wuhan University Philosophy of Religion Lecture Series, November 22, 2019.
- “A defense of epistemic moralism,” Wuhan University, April 26, 2019.
- “Are political minorities in academia victims of epistemic injustice?” (with Hrishikesh Joshi), American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division Meeting, April 3, 2018.
- “White privilege” Workshop in Heterodox Moral and Political Philosophy, University of Michigan, March 24, 2018.
- “The Meta-ethical implications of epistemic value,” APA Central Division Meeting, February 23, 2018.
- “Is nihilism self-defeating?” APA Eastern Division Meeting, January 3, 2018.
- “Polanyi’s argument for moral causation,” Michael Polanyi Society conference, Polanyi Studies: Past, Present and Future, June 11, 2016.
- “Rethinking demandingness: why scalar consequentialism and satisficing consequentialism are not less demanding than maximizing consequentialism,” APA Pacific Division Meeting, April 1, 2016.
- “Bias within disciplines: politics and epistemic injustice,” Institute for Humane Studies Graduate Research Colloquium, October 22, 2016.

- “Is reasons skepticism self-defeating?” Intermountain Philosophy Conference, Idaho State University, November 6, 2015.
- “Normative pluralism and convergence cases,” Varieties of Goodness Conference, Notre Dame’s London Global Gateway, May 11, 2015.
- “Miskawayh’s Islamic humanism,” Conference on the Virtues, Theme: Happiness, Viterbo University, April 11, 2014.
- “Normative pluralism and convergent cases” Bled, Slovenia ethics conference June 2012.
- “Soldiering as a profession,” Bled, Slovenia philosophy conference May 18, 2010.

#### COMMENTS ON OTHERS’ WORK

- Stephen Kershnar, “Are rights circular?” at Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 9, 2024 (online).
- Richard Yatter-Chappel, “Permissibility is overrated” at Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 11, 2023 (online).
- Andrew Sepielli, “Debunking Arguments and the Autonomy of Ethics” at Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 12, 2022 (online).
- Marcus Arvan, “A Hole in Cofnas’s Debunking Explanation of Moral Progress” for the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado Boulder, August 12, 2021 (online).
- Regina Rini, *The Ethics of Microaggression* author meets critics session for the Canadian Philosophical Association author-meets-critics session, June 1, 2021. (online)
- David McPherson, “Transfiguring the unborn,” for Workshop in Heterodox Moral and Political Philosophy, University of Michigan, March 16, 2019.
- Stephen Kershnar, “The sad and untimely death of desert,” Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 11, 2018.
- Joshua Blanchard, “Angsty moral realism,” Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado Boulder, August 13, 2017.
- Jean-Paul Vessel, “Desert-adjusted utilitarianism and the moral standing of animals,” APA Eastern Division Meeting, January 7, 2017.
- Judith Lichtenberg, “Effective altruism: a critique,” Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 12, 2016.
- Nicolas Laskowski, “What moral mary didn’t know,” Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado Boulder, August 6, 2015.
- Tyler Paytas, “You really ought to use a cleaver to kill Jones: the underspecification of practical oughts,” Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, April 12, 2012.

#### CLASSES TAUGHT

##### *Full responsibility*

##### **For CU Boulder**

Writing 1500: Reading, Writing and Reasoning	Spring 2016, Spring 2019, Spring 2022*, Spring 2023*,
Phil 1200: Philosophy and Society	Fall 2016
Phil 1020: Intro to Western Civilization: Early Modern Philosophy (CU Boulder)	Spring 2017
Phil 1010: Intro to Western Civilization: Ancient Philosophy	Fall 2017,

Phil 2200: Major Social and Political Theories (half semester)	Fall 2018
Phil 1100: Ethics	Summer 2018
	Fall 2020
	Fall 2021**
Phil 1250: Power, Poverty, and Patriotism	Fall 2022*

**For Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth**

Bioethics (Haverford College site)	Summer 2018
Exploring Ethics (Dickinson College site)	Summer 2024

**For Bowling Green State University**

Philosophy 2190: Death and Dying	Fall 2023
Philosophy 1020: Introduction to Ethics (five sections total)	Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024
Philosophy 6210: History of Moral Philosophy (graduate seminar)	Fall 2023
Philosophy 1010: Introduction to Philosophy (two sections)	Fall 2023
Philosophy 3100: Methods of Philosophy, Politics and Economics	Spring 2024
Philosophy 3120 Political and Social Philosophy	Fall 2024
Philosophy 1250: Contemporary Moral Issues	Fall 2024

**Classes TA-ed for (all for CU Boulder)**

Philosophy 3190: War and Morality (with David Youkey)	Fall 2015
Philosophy 3010: History of Modern Philosophy (with Dan Kaufman)	Spring 2015
Philosophy 1600: Philosophy and Religion (with Ryan Jenkins)	Fall 2014
Philosophy 3100: Ethical Theory (with Alastair Norcross)	Fall 2011

\*Online,  
asynchronous  
\*\*Online,  
synchronous

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2018. University of Colorado Boulder Philosophy Department Dissertation Completion Fellowship.
- 2018. Hayek Fund for Scholars (to present “Are Political Minorities in Academia Victims of Epistemic Injustice?” (with Hrishikesh Joshi) at the Pacific APA meeting).
- 2017. Jentzsch Prize (for the best paper by a graduate student in the CU Boulder Philosophy Department).
- 2016. Hayek Fund for Scholars (to present “Polanyi’s Argument for Moral Causation” at the Polanyi Society meeting).

2015. Stahl Prize (given by CU Boulder Philosophy Department for social/political engagement).
2012. Kathryn Davis Fellowship for Peace.
- 2012–2013. Fulbright Student Grant Recipient, Egypt. Project title: “Islam’s Lost Humanist: An Explication of Miskawayh’s Ethical System.”
2007. Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship (to study abroad in at Al Akhawayn University, Morocco).
2006. Scoop Brumfield Award for Journalistic Excellence 2nd Place for US Army Reserve in opinion for article “Use of word ‘haji’ reflects poorly on the Army” in *Anaconda Times*.
2006. Scoop Brumfield Award for Journalistic Excellence 3rd Place for US Army Reserve in News for article “Canal Renovation to address health issues” in *Anaconda Times*.

#### SERVICE

Journal referee for *Analysis*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Dialogue*, *Dialectica*, *Journal of Philosophical Research*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Utilitas*, *Thought*, *Journal of Controversial Ideas*, *Erkenntnis*, *Philosophers’ Imprint*, *Philosophia*, and *Social Theory and Practice*

Conference submission referee for Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME) 2014–2024.

Judge for Colorado Ethics Bowl finals at University of Colorado Boulder 2018.

Participant in Philosophy Outreach Program Colorado (POPCO) for visits from 2015–2018 to Columbine High School, Boulder Public High School, Niwot High School, Golden High School, Gray Havens YA reading group, and Greeley Central High School.

#### NON-ACADEMIC WRITING AND SPEAKING

Publications: *Idaho State Journal*, *Anaconda Times*, *Freedom Watch Afghanistan*, *Washington Free Beacon*, *National Review*, *Quillette*, *Arc Digital*, *Discourse*, National Association of Scholars website, *Justice Everywhere* blog, *Daily Nous* blog, *University Bookman*, and elsewhere.

Podcasting: Host of *Micro-Digression: A Philosophy Podcast* (over 27,000 downloads and 53 episodes since March 2020). Appearances on *Brain in a Vat*, *Converging Dialogues*, *Ricochet*, *Big Ideas*, *Liberte Academique*, *MeaningofLifeTV*, *Bad Boy of Science*, *Counterweight*, and others.

Public lectures and panel discussions:

“Defining Patriotism” Institute for Liberal Values, July 2024 “Liberalism in Practice” panel discussion, July 28, 2024 (online).

“Laying Siege to Stalingrad versus Standing Guard at Auschwitz: What’s the Difference?” informally for Wuhan University School of Philosophy, September 22, 2022.

Debate: “What’s the Difference between Conservatism and Progressivism?” With Dustin Crummett, hosted by Jonah Davids (online) for Applied Academia (fundraiser for Effective Altruism) September 17, 2022.

“Who was Socrates?” Guest talk for the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, China, August 27, 2021 (online).

“A history of the National Rifle Association” for conference on gun issues in the U.S., Wuhan University, May 7, 2021.

“Why vote for Trump?” Conference on American politics, Wuhan University, January 19, 2021.  
“Political correctness: a solution and a problem,” *Think!* Lecture series, University of Colorado Boulder, March 21, 2019.  
Panelist in “Make America WHAT? A Discussion about the Election Wednesday,” Center for Western Civilization, November 16, 2016.

#### REFERENCES

Karen Sites at [karen.sites@colorado.edu](mailto:karen.sites@colorado.edu) can send all these letters except the one by Michael Weber; please contact her by email. The most important two letters are Oddie’s and Cuneo’s, since Oddie was my dissertation advisor and Cuneo was the outside member on my committee. Staffel’s letter specifically concerns teaching.

Graham Oddie, Professor of Philosophy, University of Colorado Boulder  
[oddie@colorado.edu](mailto:oddie@colorado.edu)

Michael Huemer, Professor of Philosophy, University of Colorado Boulder  
[owl@owl232.net](mailto:owl@owl232.net)

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[tcuneo@uvm.edu](mailto:tcuneo@uvm.edu)

Alastair Norcross, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Colorado Boulder  
[alastair.norcross@colorado.edu](mailto:alastair.norcross@colorado.edu)

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[chris.heathwood@colorado.edu](mailto:chris.heathwood@colorado.edu)

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