

# Merrick Anderson

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University College London | 25A Henry House | Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

Email: [merrick.anderson@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:merrick.anderson@ucl.ac.uk) | Website: [www.merrickanderson.com](http://www.merrickanderson.com)

## EMPLOYMENT

Keeling Research Fellow	
University College London, Department of Philosophy	2019-
Postgraduate Research Associate and Lecturer	
Princeton University, Department of Philosophy	2018-19

## EDUCATION

Princeton University	
Ph.D. in Philosophy	07.2018
University of Toronto	
M.A. in Political Theory	08.2012
University of Toronto	
B.A. in Philosophy; Graduated with High Distinction	06.2011

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Ancient Philosophy, Normative Ethics

## AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Metaethics, Nietzsche, Political Philosophy

## PUBLICATIONS

‘Reconstructive History and Two Investigations into Justice’  
Forthcoming in (eds.) M.M. McCabe and S. Trépanier, *Rereading Plato’s Republic*

‘*Legein* to What End?’  
Forthcoming in *Australasian Philosophical Review*

‘What are the Wages of Justice? Rethinking the *Republic*’s Division of Goods’  
*Phronesis* 65.1: 1-26 (2020)

‘Immorality or Immortality? An Argument for Virtue’  
*Rhetorica* 37.2: 97-119 (2019)

‘Review of Dixsaut, *Plato-Nietzsche: Philosophy the Other Way*  
*Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2018)

‘Thrasymachus’ Sophistic Account of Justice in *Republic I*  
*Ancient Philosophy* 36.1: 151-72 (2016)

## UNDER REVIEW

‘The Power of Courage in Plato’s *Republic*’, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*

## BOOK IN PROGRESS

*Just Prospering? An Ancient Debate about the Nature and Value of Justice*

## AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

At University College London

Research Fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Studies 2019-20

At Princeton University

Mildred W. and Alfred T. Carton, Class of 1905 Fellowship

*Competitive named fellowship for outstanding research in the Humanities* 2017-18

Laurance S. Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship

*Competitive Fellowship for interdisciplinary work on human values* 2016-17

University Center for Human Values Travel Grant 2014-17

Paul Elmer More Fellowship 2013-18

Stanley J. Seeger Graduate Fellowship 2013-18

At University of Toronto

Hertog Political Studies Program Fellowship 2012

Socrates Project Fellowship 2010-11

Registrars Graduation Award in the Humanities

*Awarded to the student with the highest GPA of their graduating class* 2011

## TEACHING

At University College London – Instructor

PHIL 0186: Advanced Topics in Plato’s Philosophy Fall.2020

PHIL 0001: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy Fall.2019

At Princeton University – Instructor

PHI/CLA 205: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy Fall.2018

At Princeton University – Assistant Instructor

PHI 385: Practical Ethics Fall.2017

PHI 300: Plato and his Predecessors Fall.2016

PHI 306: Nietzsche Fall.2014

At University of Toronto – Teaching Assistant

PHL 385: Ethics and Mental Health	Spring.2013
PHL105: Introduction to Philosophy	Spring.2012
PHL 271: Law and Morality	Fall.2011
PHL 100: Introduction to Philosophy	Year.2010-11

## TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Notes on Plato's Philosophical Anthropology <i>Oxford University Philosophy Society, Oxford</i>	11.2020
On Courage in Plato's Republic and it's Lessons for us Today <i>Institute for Advanced Studies, London</i>	10.2020
A Sophistic Dialectic in <i>Republic</i> II? <i>Plato and the Sophists Workshop, University College London</i>	02.2020
Panelist for 'Comedy and Free Speech' <i>St. Peter's College, Oxford University</i>	11.2019
Canines, Cosmetics and Courtesans: <i>Nomos</i> and <i>Phusis</i> in the <i>Republic</i> <i>A.G. Leventis Conference, University of Edinburgh</i>	11.2019
The Structure and Anatomy of the Platonic Virtues <i>Institute for Classical Studies, London</i>	10.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i> <i>Philosophy Department, University College London</i>	06.2019
The Moral Philosophy of the Anonymous Iamblich and its Influence <i>Department of Classics, Durham University</i>	06.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i> <i>Pennsylvania Circle of Ancient Philosophy, Villanova University</i>	04.2019
The Ethics of Comedy and Offense <i>Human Values Forum, Princeton University</i>	03.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i> <i>Philosophy Department, Brown University</i>	01.2019
Comments on Capelletto's "On Sympathy, or how to Escape Empathy" <i>Workshop of the Postclassicisms Initiative, Mumbai</i>	07.2018
Comments on Silian's "Shapes as Objects of Mathematics in Ptolemy" <i>6th LMU-HU Joint Graduate Workshop, Berlin</i>	04.2018
How Does Justice Pay? An Analysis of Plato's <i>Republic</i> <i>Classical Philosophy Work in Progress Seminar, Princeton University</i>	10.2017
Democritus on Eudaimonia <i>International Association of Presocratic Studies, Austin</i>	06.2016
Immortality or Immortality? An Argument for Virtue <i>Princeton Philosophical Society, Princeton University</i>	10.2015
Comments on Mi-Kyoung Lee's "The Sophists on Greek Morality" <i>Toronto Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, University of Toronto</i>	03.2015

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

### *Justice and Prospering: Ancient Debates, Disagreements and Dilemmas*

My dissertation is about justice and the nature of its value. In what way is justice valuable? Is it absolutely valuable, such that its very existence makes the world a better place? Or is it only valuable as a means to living a satisfying and happy life? Perhaps neither of these categories capture the value it possesses or, then again, perhaps cynics are correct to suggest that real virtue has no value and only the appearance of virtue does us any good. These questions preoccupied the ancient Greeks and they were the first to engage in a theoretical debate about the nature of justice's value. In my dissertation, I offer an historically informed interpretation of several important works to show that the earliest philosophers had diverse, sophisticated and relevant insights into the nature of justice's value.

The culminating chapters present a new interpretation of Plato's *Republic*. Engaging with a thorny scholarly debate about the division of goods in Book II, I argue against the now-standard interpretation that Plato understands justice to be an intrinsic good, valuable totally independently of its effects. I show instead that, according to Plato, justice is valuable in virtue of the fact that it contributes to human happiness through its unique *dunamis* – its power or capacity – which has specific effects on the just agent's soul. The idea that justice has a unique power or capacity, the effects of which contribute to our happiness in specific and determinate ways, was an important innovation in moral philosophy at the time the *Republic* was written. Moreover, the account of justice's value that Plato develops in this seminal text remains compelling and philosophically profound.

The beginning chapters of the dissertation set the stage for my analysis of the *Republic* by surveying an earlier debate regarding justice. I begin 300 years before the time of Plato with what I call the Traditional View of Justice as articulated by the didactic poet Hesiod. I then show that a group of sophists sought to undermine the Traditional View by arguing that justice does not truly exist and, to the extent that it does, it does not serve the happiness of the intelligent agent. Finally, I show that yet another group of sophists responded to the first group and argued that the life of justice was in fact the best and happiest life. Not only are the arguments of the second group of sophists interesting, but Plato incorporates insights from them into his own defense of justice in the *Republic*. For this reason, understanding the earlier debate is important for fully appreciating Plato's philosophy.

## REFERENCES

### Research

Hendrik Lorenz (Primary Supervisor), Professor of Philosophy  
Princeton University, Philosophy  
+1 (609) 258 4300, hlorenz@princeton.edu

Alexander Nehamas, Class of 1943 Professor in Humanities  
Princeton University, Philosophy  
+1 (609) 258 4309, nehamas@princeton.edu

Melissa Lane, Class of 1943 Professor of Politics and Director of the UCHV  
Princeton University, Politics  
+1 (609) 258 4860, mslane@princeton.edu

John Cooper, Henry Putnam Professor of Philosophy  
Princeton University, Philosophy (Emeritus)  
+1 (609) 258 4297, johncoop@princeton.edu

Rachel Barney (External), Professor of Philosophy and Director of CPAMP  
University of Toronto, Philosophy  
+1 (416) 978 8513, rachel.barney@utoronto.ca

Fiona Leigh, Senior Lecturer and Director of Keeling Center for Ancient Philosophy  
University College London, Philosophy  
+44 (0)20 7679 3074, fiona.leigh@ucl.ac.uk

### Teaching

Benjamin Morison, Professor of Philosophy and Director Program in Classical Philosophy  
Princeton University, Philosophy  
+1 (609) 258 4304, bmorison@princeton.edu

## RESEARCH LANGUAGES

Ancient Greek, Latin, German, French (beginner)

## OTHER SERVICE

### At Princeton University

Senior Thesis supervision for Simeon Lane and Elizabeth Jobson	2018-19
Conference Moderator	2017, 2019
Resident Graduate Student, Butler College	2014-18

### At University of Toronto

Volunteer Instructor for <i>Humanities for Humanity</i>	2010-11
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