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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of California, Berkeley

expected June 2025

B.A. in Philosophy, Yale University

June 2017

DISSERTATION

Digital Frontiers of Free Speech: The internet poses novel challenges for free speech theory. Should social media platforms limit freewheeling political debate to prevent the spread of misinformation? Does the right to free speech apply to search engine results? May we restrict access to internet pornography to promote gender equality? My dissertation answers these questions by showing how the values of democracy, privacy, and equality inform the scope and limits of the right to free speech. [see page six for full dissertation summary]

Committee: R. Jay Wallace and Niko Kolodny (co-chairs), Kinch Hoekstra, Joshua Cohen

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Moral and Political Philosophy • Normative Philosophy of Technology • Early Modern Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Social Philosophy • Feminist Philosophy • Philosophy of Race and Gender

PUBLICATIONS

Grotius Contra Carneades: Natural Law and the Problem of Self-Interest

Journal of the History of Philosophy, forthcoming

Privacy and Assurance: On the Right to be Forgotten

Political Philosophy 1 (1): 212-235 (2024)

WORK IN PROGRESS

Moderation in Moderation: Free Speech, Democracy, and Social Media (Full Draft Available)

Internet Pornography and the Possibility of Gender Equality (Full Draft Available)

From Interests to Rights (In Progress)

Transparency Rules: Publicity in Governance and AI (In Progress)

Hobbes's Reply to the Fool Reconsidered (In Progress)

PUBLIC WRITING

Boston Review

The Problem Isn't Just Police—It's Politics (interview with Alex Vitale) 2020

Choosing Hope (interview with Noam Chomsky) 2019

Bloody Gina (article on U.S. torture legacy) 2018

Jacobin

The United States is Not the World's 'Indispensable Nation' (interview with Samuel Moyn) 2022

Marginalia Review of Books

Christian Wiman Illuminated (review of poet's memoir) 2019

TALKS

Hobbes's Reply to the Fool Reconsidered

—PHIL Forum, UC Berkeley September 2024

Free Speech, Pornography, and the Subordination of Women

—Workshop on the Philosophy of Social Hierarchy, Tromsø, Norway June 2024

—Richard Wollheim Society, UC Berkeley April 2024

Privacy and Forgetting

—Richard Wollheim Society, UC Berkeley October 2023

Free Speech, Democracy, and Equality

—Berkeley-London Conference, University College London, England July 2022

—Richard Wollheim Society, UC Berkeley March 2022

Are There Comparative Wrongs?

—Richard Wollheim Society, UC Berkeley March 2019

COMMENTARIES

Comments on Nora Heinzelmann's "Vom Sollen Zum Sein"

—Metaphysics and Politics in the History of Philosophy, LMU Munich planned May 2025

Comments on Mike Martin's "Relishing Fine Strokes: Hume's 'Of the Standard of Taste'"

—Kadish Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory, UC Berkeley October 2024

Comments on Stephen Darwall's "The Beginnings of Analytic Metaethics and the Analytic/Continental Divide"

—Kadish Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory, UC Berkeley September 2023

Comments on Seana Shiffrin's "Democratic Politics: Duty Delegation without Abdication" —Kadish Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory, UC Berkeley	October 2021
Comments on Steven Krasner's "Sovereignty and Restraint" —Kadish Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory, UC Berkeley	February 2019
Comments on George Borjas's "Immigration Economics and Economic Policy" —Kadish Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory, UC Berkeley	April 2018

FELLOWSHIPS and AWARDS

University of California, Berkeley

Outstanding GSI Award (awarded to less than 10 percent of teaching assistants)	2024
Erasmus+ Student Mobility Scholarship	2022
Dissertation Completion Fellowship	2022

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Referee for <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i>	2024
Discussant for PEA Soup Blog on Lowry Pressly's "The Right to Be Forgotten and the Value of an Open Future"	2024
Directed Reading Program Mentor, UC Berkeley	2022
Richard Wollheim Society Organizer, UC Berkeley	2017

LANGUAGES

Native fluency: English
Reading competence: Latin, German, Italian

TEACHING

Main Instructor

Modern Philosophy (Descartes to Kant)	Summer 2024
Individual Morality and Social Justice	Summer 2023

Assistant Instructor

Hobbes (Kristin Primus)	Fall 2024
Nietzsche (Katharina Kaiser)	Spring 2024
Special Topics in Political Philosophy: Political Realism (Hans Sluga)	Fall 2023
Individual Morality and Social Justice (Johann Frick)	Spring 2022
Political Philosophy (Véronique Munoz-Dardé)	Fall 2021
Ancient Philosophy (Michael Arsenault)	Summer 2021
Ethical Theories (R. Jay Wallace)	Spring 2021
Political Philosophy (Véronique Munoz-Dardé)	Fall 2020
Political Philosophy (Florian Grosser)	Summer 2020
Special Topics in European Philosophy: Foucault (Hans Sluga)	Spring 2020
Hume (Mike Martin)	Fall 2019

Philosophy of Race, Ethnicity, and Citizenship (Timothy Crockett)	Summer 2019
Modern Philosophy (Kristin Primus)	Spring 2019
Individual Morality and Social Justice (Hans Sluga)	Fall 2018

COURSEWORK

Qualifying Exams

Meta-Ethical Skepticism (R. Jay Wallace)	Fall 2019
Egalitarianism (Niko Kolodny)	Fall 2019
Space and Time in Hume's <i>Treatise</i> (Mike Martin)	Fall 2019

Seminars

Audit: AI Alignment from the Perspective of Formal Philosophy (Wesley Holliday, Xueyin Zhang)	Fall 2024
Audit: Leviathan (Kinch Hoekstra)	Fall 2024
Audit: History of Political Thought: Renaissance to French Revolution (Kinch Hoekstra)	Spring 2020
Kadish Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory: Sovereignty and Human Rights (Joshua Cohen, Daniel Lee)	Spring 2019
Visual Experience (Alva Noë)	Spring 2019
Foundations of Political Philosophy (Sarah Song)	Spring 2019
Early Modern Theories of the Passions (Kristin Primus)	Fall 2018
Comparative Constitutional Law (Amnon Reichman)	Fall 2018
International Environmental Law (Neil Popovic)	Spring 2018
The Reception of Homer (James Porter)	Spring 2018
Kadish Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory: Democracy (Joshua Cohen, Niko Kolodny)	Spring 2018
Art, Nature, Experience (Alva Noë)	Fall 2017
Monisms (Kristin Primus)	Fall 2017
Wittgenstein's Rule-Following Considerations (Hannah Ginsborg)	Fall 2017
First-year graduate seminar (Kristin Primus, Seth Yalcin)	Fall 2017

REFERENCES

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Dissertation Summary: Digital Frontiers of Free Speech

The internet poses novel problems for free speech theory. Does the right to free speech prohibit social media platforms, like Facebook, from dampening or removing our political posts? Does the right to free speech protect search engine results from government regulations that aim to protect people's privacy? Does the right to free speech preclude restrictions on internet pornography, even when gender equality is at stake? In my dissertation, I formulate a new normative framework for the right to free speech that answers these questions, by showing how free speech values relate to, and weigh against, the values of democracy, privacy, and equality.

Start with social media moderation. Many people think platforms are "the modern public square" and that, like in the traditional public square, restrictions on speech are rarely permissible. Others reject the analogy of the public square, arguing that platforms are like newspapers—completely free, normatively speaking, to edit content as they see fit. I argue that we cannot read off moderation principles for social media from these outmoded analogies. We must take social media on its own terms: these platforms are sites of mass participation in democratic discourse, posing unique threats like the viral spread of misinformation. The value of active citizen participation in democratic dialogue, I argue, is what underpins our free speech claims on social media. This approach explains intuitively objectionable cases of moderation while allowing that platforms may often curtail the spread of dangerous misinformation.

Take next search engines. Freedom of speech is valuable in part because it promotes the public's access to information. Search engines like Google undoubtedly promote this free speech value. But in doing so, they threaten our privacy by making our personal information very easy to discover. To offer some protection against such privacy violations, the European Union has implemented a "right to be forgotten" that allows people to petition search engines to remove links that appear on searches of their names. I defend the right to be forgotten against skeptics who worry that it undermines the public's interest in access to information. I argue that in many cases an individual's strong interests in privacy override the public's trivial interest in access to personal information. Indeed, I claim that the right to be forgotten promotes free speech, since it makes us more willing to speak in the present knowing we can remove embarrassing links from search later.

Finally, consider the threat posed to gender equality by internet pornography. Feminists have long argued that porn undermines gender equality. I reassess this argument in light of the distinct way porn is made available and consumed on the internet. I argue that the standard interpretation of gender inequality in terms of wrongful discrimination leaves out a central feature of gendered hierarchy: social subordination. Social subordination, I claim, is composed in part by attitudes of disregard and contempt. I argue that online pornography poses an increased threat of generating such attitudes because it draws men in with algorithmic addictiveness and makes it very easy and profitable for women (like "cam girls") to publicly commodify their bodies.

Freedom of speech is undoubtedly valuable for democracy, the free flow of information, and sexual freedom. Sometimes, however, we must regulate speech to reduce the spread of misinformation, to protect privacy, and promote gender equality. I offer a novel theory of free speech that allows us to strike a principled balance between these values.