

GRAHAM PARSONS

Vassar College
Department of Philosophy
124 Raymond Avenue, Box 736
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0736
917-940-3923
parsons402@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Ph.D., The Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2012.

Date degree awarded: September 30, 2012

Thesis: *More Important Than Your Life: War, Individualism, and Justice*

Advisor: Omar Dahbour

Committee Members: Linda Alcoff, Carol Gould, John Lango, Peter Simpson

BA, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2001.

Honors in the major and college honors

Santa Barbara City College, 1997-1999.

POSITIONS

Starting August 2025: Visiting Professor, Department of Philosophy, Vassar College

2024-present: Adjunct Lecturer, Bard Prison Initiative

2024-2025: Professor, Department of Law and Philosophy, United States Military Academy, West Point

2017-2024: Associate Professor, Department of English and Philosophy, United States Military Academy, West Point

2012-2017: Assistant Professor, Department of English and Philosophy, United States Military Academy, West Point

Areas of Specialization

Social and Political Philosophy, Ethics

Areas of Competence

History of Philosophy

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

(in progress) *Men of War: How Masculinity Threatens the World and What to Do About It*

(in progress) *Win the Battle, Lose the War: An Ethics of War for Strategic Reality*

Edited Series

(under contract) *Elements in Philosophy, War, and Peace*, Cambridge University Press, co-edited with Lee-Ann Chae, 35 titles to be published over the next four years.

Edited Volumes

(under contract) *What Is War Good For? New Perspectives on Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Gaza*, co-edited with Coleen Watson, Cambridge University Press.

[*How to End a War: Essays on Peace, Justice, and Repair*, co-edited with Mark Wilson, Cambridge University Press, 2023.](#)

[*Walzer and War: Reading Just and Unjust Wars Today*, co-edited with Mark Wilson, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2020.](#)

Journal Articles

["The Moral Price of Preparedness," with Kevin Cutright, Ned Dobos, and Lee-Ann Chae, *The Acorn: Philosophical Studies in Pacifism and Nonviolence*, volume 23, issue 1/2, spring 2023, pp. 93-116.](#)

["Combatants, Masculinity, and Just War Theory," *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, volume 26, issue 2, 2023.](#)

["Contract, Gender, and the Emergence of the Civil-Military Distinction," *The Review of Politics*, volume 82, issue 3, summer 2020, pp. 416-37.](#)

["A Reply to *Terrorism Unjustified* by Vicente Medina," *Reason Papers*, volume 41, issue 1, summer 2019, pp. 26-40.](#)

["The Dualism of Modern Just War Theory," *Philosophia*, volume 45, issue 2, June 2016, pp. 751-771.](#)

["What Is the Classical Theory of Just Cause? A Response to Gregory Reichberg," *Journal of Military Ethics*, volume 12, issue 4, December 2013, pp. 357-69.](#)

["Public War and the Moral Equality of Combatants," *Journal of Military Ethics*, volume 11, issue 4, December 2012, pp. 299-317.](#)

["The Incoherence of Walzer's Just War Theory," *Social Theory and Practice*, volume 38, issue 4, October 2012, pp 663-88.](#)

Chapters

(under contract) "Masculine Ignorance and the Problem of Stupid War," in *What Is War Good For? New Perspectives on Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Gaza*, edited by Graham Parsons and Coleen Watson, Cambridge University Press.

["Introduction: The Ethics of War After the Longest War," with Mark Wilson, in *How to End a War: Essays on Peace, Justice, and Repair*, edited by Graham Parsons and Mark Wilson \(Cambridge University Press, 2023\), pp. 1-9.](#)

["Walzer's Soldiers: Gender and the Rights of Combatants," in *Walzer and War: Reading Just and Unjust Wars Today*, edited by Graham Parsons and Mark Wilson \(Palgrave-MacMillan, 2020\), pp. 241-67.](#)

["'Men of Fortitude': Gender and Combatant Non-Immunity," in *Equality, More or Less*, edited by Bruce Chilton and Robert Tully \(New York: Hamilton Books, 2019\), pp. 237-56.](#)

["Walzer Contra Walzer: Uncovering the Pluralist Roots of Walzer's Just War Theory," in *Intolerance: Political Animals and Their Prey*, edited by Bruce Chilton and Robert Tully \(New York: Hamilton Books, 2017\), pp. 19-32.](#)

"Is it Ever Permissible to Deliberately Target Noncombatants in War?" in *Comparative Philosophy Today and Tomorrow*, edited by Sarah Mattice, Geoff Ashton, Joshua Kimber (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

Book Reviews

"Review of Tom Digby's *Love and War: How Militarism Shapes Sexuality and Romance*," *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy*, 16(1), fall 2016, pp. 10-12.

Contributor, "Review of *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study* by Terence Irwin," *Philosophical Forum*, volume 42, issue 3, pp. 269-335, 2011.

Public Commentaries

["The Shame of Trump's Parade," *The Atlantic*, June 14, 2025.](#)

["West Point Is Supposed to Educate, Not Indoctrinate," *The New York Times*, May 08, 2025.](#)

["A Politically Neutral Military Is Not Always Obedient," *Lawfare*, May 08, 2025.](#)

["There's a Dangerous Misconception About the Military's Obligations to the President," *The New York Times*, September 29, 2024.](#)

["Masculinity and Humanitarianism," *ICRC Humanitarian Law and Policy Blog*, May 20, 2019.](#)

["How the Pentagon Made Transgender Rights Disappear," *Just Security*, April 12, 2019.](#)

["Patriarchal War," *The Ethical War Blog*, Stockholm Centre for the Ethics of War and Peace, March 8, 2016.](#)

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- "War and Masculinity," Keynote Address, Oxford Consortium for Human Rights Workshop, 27 March 2025.
- "Just War After Gaza," West Point Security Seminar, United States Military Academy, 06 February 2025.
- "Response to Cheyney Ryan's *Pacifism as War Abolitionism*," Author Meets Critics Session, Eastern APA Meeting, New York City, 09 January 2025.
- "'Dangerous Misconception': An Evening of Philosophy and Politics with Professor Graham Parsons," United States Military Academy Preparatory School, 07 November 2024.
- "Post-Conflict Considerations for Gaza: An Interdisciplinary Panel," with Ruth Beitler, David Frey, and Led Klosky, United States Military Academy, 04 November 2024.
- Response to *Glory, Humiliation, and the Drive to War* by Nir Eiskovits, Author Meets Critics session at the Concerned Philosophers for Peace Conference, University of Alabama Birmingham, 17-18 October 2024.
- "Masculine Ignorance and the Problem of Stupid War," New York Society for Women in Philosophy Workshop, June 20, 2024.
- "The Military Ethics of a Potential Second Trump Administration: Political Neutrality in an Era of Illiberalism," International Society for Military Ethics, Colorado University Colorado Springs, June 15, 2024.
- "Masculine Ignorance and Military Strategy," Challenging War Conference, Temple University, February 23-24, 2024.
- "Masculine Ignorance and Military Strategy," Concerned Philosophers for Peace Group Session at the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting, January 15, 2024.
- "The Military: Reform or Abolish? A Debate," with Ned Dobos, Concerned Philosophers for Peace Annual Conference, October 29, 2023.
- "Masculine Ignorance and Military Strategy," Concerned Philosophers for Peace Annual Conference, October 28, 2023.
- "Is ChatGPT Unjust?" Teaching Improvement Presentation, West Point Center for Faculty Excellence, September 23, 2023.
- "Response to *The Empathetic Soldier* by Kevin Cutright," Author-Meets-Critics session, Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Conference, March 03, 2023.
- "Response to *Ethics, Security, and the War-Machine: The True Cost of the Military* by Ned Dobos," Author-Meets-Critics session, American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting, January 07, 2023.
- "Fighting to Win: Ethics, Security, and the Faith in Military Violence," Faculty Workshop, Department of Military Instruction, United States Military Academy, April 23, 2022.
- "Response to *The Bounds of Defense* by Bradley J. Strawser," manuscript symposium, Naval Post

- Graduate School, Monterrey, California, September 22, 2021.
- “Reflections on Allied Terror Bombing in World War Two,” European Chapter of the International Society for Military Ethics, June 03, 2021.
 - “Facing Up to the Subjugation of Military Service Members,” Concerned Philosophers for Peace Group Session, Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Philadelphia, PA, January 09, 2020.
 - “Facing Up to the Subjugation of Military Service Members,” Western-East Asian Military Ethics Conference, University of Virginia, December 06, 2019.
 - “Facing Up to the Subjugation of Military Service Members,” invited talk, Department of Law and Philosophy, Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, November 19, 2019.
 - “The Ethics of Forced Distribution of Officer Evaluations,” with MAJ Joseph Mazzocchi, Individualisation of War Project Practitioner Workshop, West Point, February 13, 2019.
 - “Is the Military a Civic Proving Ground?” panel on Immigration, Military Service, and Citizenship, American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting, New York, NY, January 08, 2019.
 - “Just War Theory and Gender,” Conference on Chinese-Western Ethics of War and Peace, University of Virginia, November 30-December 01, 2018.
 - “Reply to *Terrorism Unjustified*,” Author Meets Critics Session on Vicente Medina’s *Terrorism Unjustified: The Use and Misuse of Political Violence*, Felician College, April 21, 2018.
 - “Walzer’s Soldiers: Gender and the Rights of Combatants,” 4th Annual Conference on the Ethics of War and Peace, West Point, NY, October 27, 2017.
- Respondent: Michael Walzer
- “Walzer’s Soldiers: Gender and the Rights of Combatants,” North American Society for Social Philosophy, Annual Conference, Loyola University, Chicago, July 15, 2017.
 - “Men of Fortitude: Gender and Combatant Non-Immunity,” Bard College-West Point Conference on Equality, April 13, 2017.
 - “Men of Fortitude: Gender and Combatant Non-Immunity,” Long Island University Philosophy Colloquium, April 5, 2017.
 - “Repealing Obamacare? Reflections on Justice and Access to Health Insurance,” Philosophy Forum Lecture, USMA, February 21, 2017.
 - “Families, Armies, and the Traditional Social Contract,” New York Society for Women in Philosophy Workshop (SWIPshop), July 23, 2016.
 - “Hugo Grotius and Modern Political Theory,” Seminar, Bard Prison Initiative, Fishkill Correctional Facility, June 3, 2016.
 - “Families, Armies, and the Traditional Social Contract,” Conference on Ethical Issues in International Affairs, The Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Law, Binghamton University, April 14-15, 2016.
 - “Families, Armies, and the Traditional Social Contract,” International Society for Military Ethics, Conference on Women Serving in the Armed Forces, United States Naval Academy, January 29-30, 2016.
 - “Families, Armies, and Gender,” Department Colloquium, Department of English and Philosophy, West Point, October 6, 2015.
 - “Families and Armies in Early Modern Social Contract Theory,” Hypatia/APA Committee on the Status of Women Conference, Villanova University, May 28-30, 2015.
 - “Walzer *Contra* Walzer: Uncovering the Pluralist Roots of Walzer’s Just War Theory,” Bard College-West Point Joint Seminar on Toleration, April 8-9, 2015.
 - “Families and Armies in Early Modern Political Theory,” Association for Political Theory Annual Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 18, 2014.
 - “John Dewey, WWI, and the Politics of Peace,” Conference on Literature, Memory, and the First World War, West Point, September 13, 2014.
 - “Plato’s *Euthyphro*,” Seminar, Bard Prison Initiative, Eastern Correctional Facility, July 23, 2014.
 - “The Dualism of Modern Just War Theory,” Colloquium, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Marist College, February 7, 2014.
 - “The Dualism of Modern Just War Theory,” Felician College Ethics Institute Workshop, Felician College, November 13, 2013.
 - “Public War, Individualism, and the Traditional Social Contract,” Association for Political Theory Annual Conference, Vanderbilt University, October 11, 2013.

- “The Absurdity of Public War for Human Rights,” Canadian Jacques Maritain Association Symposium, University of Victoria, June 5, 2013.
- “Public War, Individualism, and the Traditional Social Contract,” Faculty Research Seminar, Department of Social Sciences, West Point, May 6, 2013.
- “The Incoherence of Walzer’s Just War Theory,” The International Society for Military Ethics Annual Conference, University of San Diego, January 24-27, 2012.
- “Public War and the Moral Equality of Combatants,” Brooklyn College Philosophy Society, Brooklyn College, October 27, 2011.
- “Political Authority and Responsibility for Just War,” Long Island Philosophical Society, Long Island University, Brooklyn, October 15, 2011.
- “Ideology, History, and Terrorism,” 2009 Uehiro CrossCurrents Philosophy Conference, University of Hawaii at Manoa, March 19-20.
- “Is it Ever Permissible to Deliberately Target Noncombatants in War?,” 2007 Uehiro CrossCurrents Philosophy Conference, University of Hawaii at Manoa, March 22-23.

CONFERENCE RESPONSES

- On “Torture: Rescue, Prevention, and Punishment” by Frances M. Kamm, Conference on the Ethics of War and Peace, Villanova University, April 8-9, 2016.
- On “The Epidemiological Challenge to Just War Theory” by Paul Wise, American Academy of Arts and Sciences Workshop on New Dilemmas in Ethics, Technology, and War, West Point, November 4-5, 2015.
- On “The Virtue Ethical Case for Pacifism” by Franco Trivigno, 2011 American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting, December 28, 4:00pm.
- On “Varieties of Moral Equivalence in Just War Theory” by Saba Bazargan, CUNY Graduate Center Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, 2008.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Bard Prison Initiative, fall 2024 to present
BA Seminar in Literature and Humanities
Political Philosophy

United States Military Academy, fall 2012 through spring 2025
Ancient Philosophy
Topics in Ethics: Philosophy of Race (2 sections)
20th-Century Philosophy (2 sections)
Political Philosophy (3 sections)
Senior Seminar: Race and Racism
Military Ethics (2 sections)
Topics in Ethics: The Ethics and Politics of Immigration
Senior Seminar: Social Ontology (3 sections)
Kant and 19th-Century Philosophy
Topics in Ethics: Feminist Ethical and Political Theory (2 sections)
Philosophy and Ethical Reasoning (>60 sections)
Advanced Philosophy and Ethical Reasoning (4 sections)
Advanced Composition through Cultural Studies (3 sections)
Senior Thesis Advisor (8 theses)

Brooklyn College, spring 2008 through spring 2012

Moral Issues in Business (18 sections)
Ethics and Society (7 sections)
Knowledge, Reality, and Values (3 sections)
Foundations of Ethics
Global Ethics

St. John's University, fall 2006 through fall 2007
Ethics (5 sections)
Philosophy of the Human Person (3 sections)

Nassau Community College, summer 2008 and summer 2009
Introduction to Philosophy
Medical Ethics

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Member, Committee on Public Philosophy, American Philosophical Association, 2025 to present

Executive Committee, Concerned Philosophers for Peace, 2022 to present
Responsible for organizing group events at Eastern Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association and voting on committee motions

Course Director of Core Course PY201: Philosophy and Ethical Reasoning, 2020 to 2025

Supervise between eight and twelve instructors; develop a syllabus and curriculum for all instructors; mentor and observe new instructors; conduct pedagogical workshops; coordinate with other core courses and ethics curricula across the Academy

Program Director and Lead Organizer, 2023 Conference on the Ethics of War and Peace, West Point

Theme: *What Is It Good For? Rethinking the Uses of War After Afghanistan and the Invasion of Ukraine*

Speakers included: Neta Crawford, Ned Dobos, Mary Dudziak, Samuel Moyn, Steven Pinker, Cheyney Ryan, and Elizabeth Samet

Chair, Dean's Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2019 to 2023

Wrote and helped get approved a new charter for the committee that strengthened its power in the governing structure; benchmarked the diversity and inclusion content in the curriculum; studied the state of transgender inclusivity; advocated aggressively for new initiatives, including the Transgender Night of Remembrance and Juneteenth observances.

Coach, Ethics Bowl Team, 2016 to 2024

Qualified for National Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020,

2021, and 2022

Northeast Regional Ethics Bowl Championship, 2016, 2020, and 2022

National Ethics Bowl Championship, 2017

Program Director, The Philosophy Forum, 2014 to 2024

Events organized include

Philip Kitcher on *What's the Use of Philosophy?*

Andrew Curran on "Where Did the Concept of Race Come From?"

Elizabeth Samet on *Looking for the Good War: American Amnesia and the Violent Pursuit of Happiness*

Barry Smith on "Why Not Robot Police? On the Limits of Artificial Intelligence"

Endre Begby on *Prejudice: A Study in Non-Ideal Epistemology*

Alessandra Tanesini on *The Mismeasure of the Self: A Study in Vice Epistemology*

Rebecca Mason on "Women Are not Adult Human Females"

John Harfouch on "What Does Racism Have to Do with the Mind-Body Problem?"

Jonathan Wolff on "The Ethics of Hoarding Vaccines"

Candice Delmas on "Uncivil Disobedience from BLM to the Capitol"

Serena Parekh on *No Refuge: Ethics and the Global Refugee Crisis*

Pauline Shanks Kaurin on "Cats, Dogs, and Soldiers: Thinking through Obedience as a Virtue"

Brandon del Pozo on "Revisioning American Policing"

Susan Brison on "Rethinking Rape: Beyond Consent"

Charles Mills on "What is White Supremacy?"

Candice Delmas on "The Ethics of Hacktivism"

Hugo Slim on "What's the Difference? Humanitarian and Military Virtues Compared"

Achille Varzi on "Surviving Change: The Problem of Change and Identity through Time"

Michele Moody-Adams on "The Art of Remembrance and the Democratic Imagination"

Nancy Sherman on *Afterwar: Healing the Moral Wounds of Our Soldiers*

Helen Frowe and Seth Lazar on "The Status of Civilians in War: Two Views"

Danielle Allen on *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality*

John Corvino on "The Meaning of (Gay) Marriage"

Virginia Held on "The Ethics of Care: Anything New?"

Carol Gilligan on "Resisting 'Masculinity' and 'Femininity'"

Superintendent's Honor Review Committee, 2019 to 2022

Military Ethics Working Group

Designed ethics core course for the Navy Community College; personally responsible for content and delivery of two lessons to eventually be given to all enlisted servicemembers in US Navy

Program Director and Lead Organizer, 2019 Conference on the Ethics of War and Peace, West Point

Theme: *How to End a War: Peace, Justice, and Repair*

Invited Speakers: Nir Eisikovits, Catherine Lu, Daniel Maurer, Colleen Murphy, Daniel Philpott, Linda Radzik, David Rodin, Nancy Sherman, Lisa Tessman

Lead Organizer, Individualisation of War Practitioner Workshop, 13-14 February 2019

This workshop paired eight ethicists with eight military officers to jointly investigate ethical challenges that the officers have grappled with in their professional experiences.

Program Director and Lead Organizer, 2017 Conference on the Ethics of War and Peace, West Point

Theme: *Reassessing Michael Walzer's Just and Unjust Wars on the 40th anniversary of its publication*

Speakers included Michael Walzer, Jennifer Welsh, Henry Shue, Jeremy Waldron, David Luban, Judith Lichtenberg, Margaret Moore, Lisa Cahill, and LTG (R) James Dubik.

Civilian Leadership Working Group, 2016 to 2017

This working group examined the state of military-civilian faculty relations in response to the white paper recommending civilian faculty be permitted to compete for Department Head and Dean positions.

Program Director and Lead Organizer, 2015 Conference on the Ethics of War and Peace, West Point

Invited Speakers included Nigel Biggar, Richard Miller, Fiona Robinson, Jeremy Waldron, and Michael Walzer. Sixteen undergraduates, including eight West Point cadets, presented papers on various ethical dimensions of war and warfare. Over sixty students and scholars attended as interested audience members.

Liaison to American Academy of Arts and Sciences for Workshop on New Dilemmas in Ethics, Technology, and War, November 2015

Facilitated workshop at West Point with over twenty authors for two-volume special issue of *Daedalus* on New Dilemmas in Ethics, Technology, and War, including identifying West Point faculty respondents.

Journal Referee: *Critical Military Studies, Ethics and International Affairs, Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy, Journal of Ethics, Journal of Military Ethics, Journal of Social Philosophy, Philosophical Studies, Social Theory and Practice, Theoria*

Co-organizer, Teaching Practicum, 2014-15

Department Academic Counselor, 2014-16

Department Assessment Review and Curriculum Committee 2014-16

Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, Outreach Committee, 2013-16

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Marc Sanders Foundation Philosophy in Media Fellow, 2024

Fellow, Individualisation of War Project, Department of Social and Political Sciences, European University Institute, Florence, Italy, 2018-19.

USMA Superintendent's Certificate of Appreciation, 2015

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, 2010-2011
Doctoral Student Research Grant, 2010
University Fellowship, CUNY Graduate Center, 2004-2005

MEMBERSHIPS

American Philosophical Association
Association for Practical and Professional Ethics
North American Society for Social Philosophy
Concerned Philosophers for Peace

REFERENCES

Linda Martín Alcoff
Professor
Hunter College and Graduate Center, CUNY
lmartina@hunter.cuny.edu

Virginia Held
Distinguished Professor Emerita
Hunter College and Graduate Center, CUNY
vheld@gc.cuny.edu

David Rodin
Senior Research Fellow
University of Oxford
david.rodin@gmail.com

Cheyney Ryan
Senior Research Fellow
University of Oxford
cheyney.ryan@bsg.ox.ac.uk

Michael Walzer
Professor Emeritus
Institute for Advanced Study
walzer@ias.edu