

Chris Melenovsky

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APPOINTMENTS

Suffolk University: Associate Professor (Jul. 2024 - present)
Suffolk University: Assistant Professor (Jan. 2019 - Jun. 2024)
Utica College: Assistant Professor (Aug 2016 - Dec 2018)
UNC Chapel Hill: Research Assistant Professor, PPE Program (Jul. 2014 - Jul. 2016)

EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania: Ph.D in Philosophy (May 2014)
University of Pennsylvania: MA in Philosophy (May 2011)
University of Michigan: BA in Philosophy, BA in Economics (Jan. 2007)

ARTICLES

“Public Reason in and out of the Well-Ordered Society” *American Political Thought* (forthcoming)
“When Legal Reform Wrongs Rights-Holders” *Law and Philosophy* 44 (2025)
“The Reasons to Follow Conventional Practices” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 102.3 (2024)
“Interests from and in Conventions” *Synthese* 200.1 (2022)
“Conventionalism and Legitimate Expectations” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 18.2 (2021)
“Social Cooperation as Institutional Rule-Following” *Public Affairs Quarterly* 34.1 (2020)
“The Status Quo in Buchanan’s Constitutional Contractarianism” *Homo Oeconomicus* 36.2 (2019)
“The Value of a Non-Ideal” *Social Theory and Practice* 45.3 (2019)
“Rawlsian Objectivity” *Journal of the APA* 4.4 (2019)
“The Implicit Argument for the Basic Liberties” *Res Publica* 24.4 (2018)
“Not all Political Lies are Morally Equal” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 49.2 (2018)
“Incentives, Conventionalism, and Constructivism” *Ethics* 126.3 (2016)
“Promises, Practices, and Reciprocity” *Philosophical Quarterly* 67.266 (2016)
“Why Free Market Rights are Not Basic Liberties” [w/ J. Bernstein] *Journal of Value Inquiry* 49.1 (2015)
“The Basic Structure as a System of Social Practices” *Social Theory and Practice* 39.4 (2013)

BOOKS

Kantian Conventionalism [out for external review with Oxford University Press]
Routledge Handbook of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics editor, Taylor and Francis (2022)

BOOK CHAPTERS

- “Equality in the Choice of an Economic System” *The Routledge Handbook of Equality*
edited by von Platz (forthcoming)
- “Rawls and the Basic Structure of Society” *The Oxford Handbook on the Philosophy of John Rawls*
edited by Neufeld, Hartley, and Watson (forthcoming)
- “Philosophy, Politics, and Economics” *The Routledge Handbook of Political Philosophy*, 2nd ed.
edited by Muldoon and D'Agnostino (2025)
- “Institutions and Institutionalism” *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics*
edited by Melenovsky (2022)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Areas of Specialization:

Political Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, and Political Economy

Areas of Competence:

Philosophy of Law, History of Moral and Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Social Science

ARTICLES IN DEVELOPMENT

names excluded to maintain review process:

[article about objections to using a prominent accounting metric]

[article about the concept of “reasonable” in Rawls]

[article defending a Hartian understanding of law against Dworkin, Shapiro, and Marmor]

DISSERTATION

“A Mooring for Ethical Life: Assessing the Basic Structure of Society”

Supervisor: Samuel Freeman

Committee: Kok-Chor Tan, Waheed Hussain, and Elisabeth Camp

Abstract: The dissertation defends the Rawlsian focus on the basic structure of society as the primary subject of justice. It explains what the basic structure is and why it is morally significant. By structuring our interaction with others, our basic institutions do not merely cause certain distributions, they often determine our moral obligations, our rights, and our values.

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee	(Jul. 2025 - present)
- Overseeing revisions to General Education Program	
Philosophy Program Coordinator (<i>in lieu of dept. chair</i>)	(Jul. 2024 - present)
PPE Program Co-Coordinator	(Jul. 2024 - present)
PPE Program Director	(Jul. 2021 - Jun. 2024)
CAS Honors Program Director	(Jul. 2021 - Jun. 2022)
PPE Program Assistant Director	(Jan. 2019 - Jun. 2021)

PRESENTATIONS

"The 21st Century Threat to Free Markets"	PPE Society Meeting (Nov. 2025)
"Degrees of Determinacy over Natural Rights"	PPE Society Meeting (Nov. 2025)
"Kantian Conventionalism and the Law"	Stephenson Institute Workshop (May 2025)
"Kantian Conventionalism and Obligation"	Safra Center Workshop, Harvard (Mar 2025)
"Generative Conventionalism and the Law"	PPE Society Meeting (Nov. 2024)
"Kantian Conventionalism and Property"	Stephenson Institute Workshop (May 2024)
"The Principle of Fairness, Conventionalism, and Kant"	PPE Society Meeting; (Nov. 2023)
"Generative Conventionalism and the Law"	Vrije University Value Theory Workshop (Jul. 2023)
"Against EBITDA: Social Costs of an Accounting Metric"	PPE Society Meeting (Nov. 2022)
"Public Reason In and Out of the Well-Ordered Society"	2021 PPE Society Meeting (Feb. 2022) Samuel Freeman Retirement Celebration (Apr. 2022)
"Kantian Conventionalism"	2020 PPE Society Meeting (Mar. 2021)
"Defending Practice Positivism"	PPE Society Meeting (Mar 2019)
"Property Rights and Injustice"	PPE Society Meeting (Mar 2018)
"Conventionalism as Communitarian Contractualism"	Rocky Mountain Ethics (Aug 2017)
"A Moral Taxonomy of Social Practices"	PPE Society Meeting (Mar. 2017)
"Contractualist Conventionalism"	APA Eastern Division Meeting (Jan. 2016)
"An Improved Conception of Social Cooperation"	MIT Political Theory Workshop (Oct. 2015) UNC/Duke PPE Workshop (Aug. 2015)
"The Implicit Argument for the Basic Liberties"	World Congress for IAPLSP 2015 (Jul. 2015)
"Rawlsian Objectivity"	APA Pacific Division Meeting (Apr. 2015)
"Promises, Practices, and Reciprocity"	UNC/Duke PPE Workshop (Aug. 2014)
"The Basic Structure and Ethical Life"	APA Pacific Division Meeting (Apr. 2014) Felician Ethical Conference (Apr. 2014)
"Rawlsian Objectivity and Naturalism"	York University Graduate Conference (Apr. 2014)
"The Practice-Dependent Wrong of Promise-Breaking"	Rocky Mountain Ethics (Aug. 2012) Felician Ethical Conference (Apr. 2012)
"The Basic Structure as a Set of Social Practices"	CUNY Graduate Conference, (Apr. 2012)
"Legal Obligation, Fairness and the Value of Choice"	UPenn Constitutionalism Prog. (Mar. 2012)
"Finessing Ecumenical Expressivism"	Brandeis Graduate Student Conference (Mar. 2010)
"International Right and Kant's World-Federation"	Oxford Graduate Conference (Nov. 2009)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Political Economy (Senior PPE Seminar) (Spring 2021, 22; Fall 2022, 23, 24, 25)
- A senior seminar focused on discussion of interdisciplinary topics and writing a final research paper. Topics include analyses of economic systems, public choice theory, and public reason.
- Social and Political Philosophy (Spring 2025; Fall 2022, 23, 25)
- Focuses on key historical texts to bring out trends in philosophy about government authority, economic justice, and social oppression (from Hobbes to Kimberle Crenshaw)
- Ethics and Civic Life (Fall 2019, 20, 21; Spring 2024, 25)
- By focusing on specific policy debates (esp. minimum wage, trade, and immigration), this class highlights how ethical theory interacts with social science to argue for or against specific policies.
- Socialism vs. Capitalism (First Year Seminar) (Fall 2024)
- Focus on debates about economic systems including Smith, Marx, Lenin, Dubois, Keynes, Hayek, Meade, and 21st century writers. The focus is on systems that are between Capitalism and Socialism.
- Philosophy of Law (Fall 2016, 17, 18, 19, 21, Spring 2023)
- A survey of both analytic and normative problems in Tort Law, Contract Law, Criminal Law, Property Law, and Constitutional Law. Specific Supreme Court cases are used throughout.
- Capitalism, Equality, and Justice (Fall 2020)
- Surveys historical and contemporary arguments for and against Capitalism with emphasis on Smith, Marx, feminism, and economic development.
- Social Ethics (Spring 2019)
- Introductory ethics class on individual responsibility for collectively harmful behavior such as consumer choices and sustaining harmful norms.
- Environmental Ethics (Spring 2019)
- Upper level Philosophy and PPE course that focuses on ethical difficulties in the treatment of natural environments (with emphasis on policy decisions).
- Introduction to Ethics (Fall 2014, 16, 17, 18; Spring 17)
- Focuses on developing skill in ethical reasoning by reviewing key ethical distinctions, applied topics, and major moral theories.
- Law and Ethics of Cyber Espionage (Fall 16, 17; Spring 2017, 18)
- Evaluates the policy and law that surround state-on-state, state-on-person, and company-on-company espionage with a special focus on cyber-espionage.
- Political Ethics (Spring 2018; Fall 2012)
- Applied ethics with focus on moral issues faced within political institutions. The class starts with ethics for legislators, then on to questions about voting, following the law, and judicial ethics.
- Theories of Justice (Spring 2017)
- Starting with contemporary debates, this class introduces political theories with a focus on Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Smith, Marx, and Rawls.
- Ethics of Peace, War, and Defense (Summer 2016; Spring 2016)
- Teaches the basics of and alternatives to just war theory before applying these ideas to contemporary topics like drone use, targeted killing, and secrecy.
- Introduction to PPE (Fall 2014, 2015; Spring 2015)
- Examines rational choice theory, game theory, public choice theory, norms theory, and principles of distributive justice as introductory PPE class.
- Capstone Seminar in PPE (Spring 2015, 2016)
- Senior research seminar PPE program. Topics include cost-benefit analysis, public choice theory, the value of democracy, and measures of well-being.
- The Social Contract (Summer 2012)
- A class that contextualizes and explains the historical development of the Social Contract through Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Rawls, and Charles Mills. The approach is contrasted to alternatives.

— SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE —

Suffolk University

- Chair of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for CAS (Jul. 2025 - present)
- Coordinator for the Philosophy Program (Jul. 2024 - present)
- Coordinator (with Rachel McKinney) for the PPE program (Aug. 2024 - present)
- Department of Economics Hiring Committee (Aug. 2024 - Apr. 2025)
- Member of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (Aug. 2023 - Jun. 2025)
- Director of PPE Program (Aug. 2020 - Aug. 2024)
- Advisor of Undergraduate PPE Club (Aug. 2020 - Aug. 2024)
- Supervised Undergraduate Research Assistant (Spring 2021, Summer 2024, 21, 20)
- Lead Organizer for “PPE Policy Event” Series (Jan. 2019 - May 2024)
- Director of CAS Honors Program (Aug. 2021 - Jul. 2022)
- Department of Philosophy Hiring Committee (Aug. 2022 - Apr. 2025)
- Taught (uncompensated) “Internship in PPE” course (Fall 2023, Spring 2023)
- Member of Education Policy Committee (Aug. 2019 - Jul. 2022)
- Honors Faculty Advisory Committee (Jan. 2019 - Dec. 2022)
- Honors Coordinator for PPE/Philosophy (Jan. 2019 - Dec. 2022)
- Thesis committee for EPP MA student, Nicholas Raby (Jan. 2021 - Dec. 2021)

Utica College

- Academic Standards Committee (Jan. 2018 - Dec. 2018)
- Advisor for Utica College Debate Team (Aug. 2016 - Dec. 2018)
- Core Oversight Committee (Aug. 2016 - May 2017)

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- Organizer, Kantian Ethics Reading Group (Aug. 2015 - May 2016)
- Undergraduate honors thesis advisor for Daniel Irving (Aug. 2015 - May 2016)
- Corrected the revised edition of *A Theory of Justice* to identify places where the publisher did not make the revisions requested by John Rawls. (Summer 2015)
- Led undergraduate reading group, *The Heart of Human Rights* (Fall 2015)
- Led undergraduate reading group, *Capital in the 21st Century* (Spring 2015)
- Judge for North Carolina State Ethics Bowl Competition (Fall 2014, Spring 2015)

University of Pennsylvania

- Instructor and Organizer for UNICEF Social Norms Course (Summers. 2010 - 2015)
- Academic Administrator for CERL (at the Law School) (Jun. 2011 - Dec. 2012)
- Researcher for the Social Responsibility Action Committee (Aug. 2014)
- Consultant for UNICEF on Social Norms and Development (Jan. - Sep. 2012)
- Graduate Associate, Harrison College House (Jan. 2009 - May 2014)
- Copy-edited Adrienne Martin's *How We Hope* (Spring 2012)
- Lead Organizer for Graduate Student Conference on Value Theory (Nov. 2012)
- Organizer, Graduate Student Reading Group in Value Theory (Fall 2010 - Fall 2013)
- Undergraduate honors thesis advisor for Claudia Ricciardi (Spring 2012)
- Graduate Student Representative, Philosophy Department (Aug. 2011 - Aug. 2012)
- Organizer, UPenn Graduate Student Writing Group (Aug. 2011 - May 2012)
- Copy-edited *Targeted Killings: Law and Morality in an Asymmetric World* (Fall 2011)
- Copy-edited Kok-Chor Tan's *Justice, Institutions, and Luck* (Spring 2011)