

Joel Ballivian

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Professional Website

SPECIALIZATIONS

AOS: Social-Political Philosophy. Philosophy of Race. Ethics.
AOC: Philosophy of Religion. Philosophy of Science.

EDUCATION	PhD Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison	2017-2026
	M.A. Philosophy, Western Michigan University	2015-2017
	B.A. Philosophy, Western Michigan University	2013-2015

DISSERTATION *After Injustice—Reparation and the Reconstruction of Equality* Defended 2026
Harry Brighouse (chair); Russ Shafer-Landau, Jennifer Page, Jamie Goodrich, Keisha Lindsay, and Rob Strieffer (committee members)

PUBLICATIONS 1. “Who Pays Reparation? The Burdens and Benefits of Historic Injustice.” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* (Forthcoming).
2. “Fine-Tuning Arguments and Biological Design Arguments: Can the Theist Have Both?” *Religious Studies* (2019).

WORK IN PROGRESS 1. “Redress and Leviathan”—a paper defending a new theory of reparation, blending retributive and egalitarian ideals.
2. “Redress and Police Injustice”—a paper arguing that police departments must bear the cost of redress for their grievous injustices.

PRESENTATIONS

“Egalitarianism and Reparation: Why Reparative Justice is Not Redundant.”
• American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division Meeting (April 2026)
“Reparation for Police Injustice: Why the Police Must Pay.”
• Philosophy, Politics, and Policing Conference (May 2025)
“American Whitelash and Redress for Historic Injustice”
• Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (March 2025)
“Reparation Imposed”
• Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (February 2024; winner of the *Best Paper by a Graduate Student* award)

“Infectious Racism”

- Invited alumni speaker, Western Michigan University graduate student conference (February 2024)

“Is Reparation Fair?”

- Great Lakes Philosophy Conference on Race and Ethics (April 2023)

“Effective Altruism or Effective Reparations?”

- Midwest Ethics Symposium (April 2023)

“Reparations for Historic Racism: What Does Benefitting Have to Do With It?”

- Concerned Philosophers for Peace, meeting of the APA-Central (February 2023).

“Reparations for Historic Racism: Can the Government Legitimately Make the Innocent Pay?”

- American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting (February 2023)

“I Would Do Anything For Love, But I Won’t Do That: A Dilemma About Falling in Love.”

- Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love (February 2023)

“Transgressive Teaching Without Dogmatic Teaching.”

- Society for Ethics Across the Curriculum (2022)

“The Imago Dei and Responsibility for Injustice.”

- Society for Christian Philosophers Midwest Meeting (2022)

“Racial Apathy and the Persistence of Injustice.”

- American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting (2022)
- Concerned Philosophers for Peace (2021)

“Not Those Auxiliary Hypotheses: Evidence, Theory Evaluation, and Probabilistic Underdetermination.”

- American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting (2021).

“What are the chances? Probability and Social Privilege”

- Association for Practical and Applied Ethics (Spring 2021).
- Bowling Green State University Graduate Student Conference. Theme: *Identity and Intersectionality* (2020).

“Wrongful Enrichments and the Limits of Offsetting Privilege”

- Association of Practical and Applied Ethics, Annual International Conference (February 2020)

“Dealing With Moral Demand: Character, Psychology, and Lichtenberg’s Desiderata.”

- Bowling Green State University Applied Ethics Workshop (2016).

“Oughts”, “Cans”, and Moral Demands: Remarks on Lichtenberg and the Importance of Moral Character.”

- Western Michigan University Medical Humanities Conference (2016)

“Prior Probabilities, Non-Universal Revelation, and Butler’s *The Analogy of Reli-*

gion.”

- Atlantic Canada Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (2016).

AWARDS & HONORS

“John Rawls Prize”—departmental award for excellent work in political philosophy (2026).

“Berent Enc Graduate Teaching Award,” departmental award for excellence in teaching (2025).

“Best Graduate Student Paper” award, Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (February 2024).

Graduate Student Fellowship (Spring/Summer 2021).

“Temkin Award,” for best graduate student paper in ethics. “Confirmation for Categorical Reasons” (spring 2019).

“Oliver Graduate Student Prize Essay,” for best graduate student paper. “How Not to Be a Bayesian Dogmatist” (spring 2018).

\$1,000 Merit Scholarship, Philosophy Gift Fund, Western Michigan University (fall 2015).

Presidential Scholar Award, for excellence in undergraduate work in philosophy, awarded by WMU philosophy department (Spring, 2015).

“Above and Beyond Award”—Montcalm Community College Religion and Philosophy Club (04/19/2013).

“Certificate of Recognition,” for extra-curricular participation and effort in the Montcalm Community College Religion and Philosophy Club as an outstanding officer (04/19/2013).

TEACHING

- **Contemporary Moral Issues (4x)**, UW-Madison

An exploration of contemporary moral issues with special attention given to social movements, including #blm, #metoo, abolitionism, feminism, animal welfarism, anti-fascism, and the ethics of resistance and campus protest.

- **Business Ethics (2x)**, UW-Madison

An overview of ethical issues in business, including whistleblowing, the gender pay gap, toxicity in the workplace, and the moral status of capitalism.

- **Introductory Ethics (3x)**, UW-Madison

An exploration of moral theories and their relevance to recent social issues.

- **Philosophy of Science (3x)**, Western Michigan University.

An overview of perennial debates in the philosophy of science, including realism vs.

antirealism, science vs. pseudoscience, and the nature of scientific reasoning.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

- **Contemporary Moral Issues** (2x. Lead instructors: Brighthouse, Hauseman).

A philosophical study of some of the major moral issue in contemporary society, such as those concerning abortion, euthanasia, punishment, property, politics, sex, nuclear disarmament, and world hunger.

- **Introduction to Philosophy** (3x)

An introductory course exploring perennial and recent debates in philosophy.

REFERENCES

Harry Brighthouse.

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Mildred Fish Harnack Professor of Philosophy and Carol Dickson Bascom Professor
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Jesse Steinberg (teaching faculty).

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**GRADUATE
COURSEWORK**

Political Philosophy

- Political Philosophy (Harry Brighouse)
- Fairness and Equality (Dan Hausman)
- African American Political Thought (Kiesha Lindsay)
- Political Philosophy of Language (John MacKay)

Public Policy

- Comparative National Policy (Pifarré i Arolas)
- Poverty and Inequality in the U.S. (Carlson)
- International Development Policy (McKelvey)

Ethics

- Metaethics (Russ Shafer-Landau and John Bengson)
- Moral Dilemmas (Peter Vranas)
- Practical Ethics (Mike Pritchard)
- Contemporary Issues in Metaethics (Shafer-Landau)

Epistemology & Philosophy of Science

- Epistemology of Perception (Farid Masrour)
- Formal Epistemology (Mike Titelbaum)
- The Design Argument (Elliott Sober)
- Inference to the Best Explanation Reader (Tim McGrew)
- Philosophy of Science (Marc Alspecter-Kelly)
- Philosophical Applications of Probability Theory (McGrew)
- Knowledge Closure and Dogmatism, independent study (Alspecter-Kelly)
- Theory of Knowledge (Alspecter-Kelly)
- Decision Theory (McGrew and Glatz)

History of Philosophy

- Descartes (Steve Nadler)
- Aristotle's Metaphysics (Paula Gotlieb)
- Early Analytic Philosophy (James Martin)

Metaphysics and Language

- Philosophy of Language and Logic (Ashley Atkins)
- Metaphysics (Dan Dolson)
- Philosophical Applications of Symbolic Logic (Martin)

DISSERTATION My dissertation seeks to fortify the case for reparation, especially by identifying reparation’s importance within egalitarian political theory. Each chapter evaluates a specific dimension of reparationist politics.

Chapter 1: Who Pays Reparation?

Chapter 1 introduces, and strengthens, the perennial objection that reparation wrongfully imposes burdens on innocent taxpayers. I pay special attention to a popular response—the idea that reparation does not constitute wrongful imposition because present-day taxpayers benefit from historic injustice. In the literature, this argument has tended to rely on the Beneficiary Pays Principle (BPP). As I argue, BPP fails to vindicate reparation against the charge of wrongful imposition. In general, BPP constitutes weak support for reparation. In its place, I offer a new theory about the way benefits of injustice might improve the fairness of reparation.¹

Chapter 2: Redress and Leviathan

Chapter 2 introduces a new theory of reparation’s egalitarian significance—the disciplinary theory of reparation. It is often claimed that reparation has a special relationship to equality. I argue that the best way to theorize this relationship is in terms of reparation’s retributive dimensions. To see this, we need to update relational egalitarian theory. What is missing is an emphasis on the need for relational “leveling down.” In cases of state-based racism, the state acts as a kind of master over racial victims. This type of perverse self-aggrandizement calls for demotion and discipline. Masters must be brought low. Reparation plays a unique and indispensable role in achieving this task. I explain how this theory compares to, and improves upon, other theories of reparation.

Chapter 3: Redress and Police Injustice—Why the Police Must Pay

Finally, police violence is an enduring reality in communities across the United States. Chapter 3 argues that police departments ought to be held responsible for bearing the cost of reparation for their violent abuses of power, especially abuses with a racist flavor. This requires going beyond typical models for compensating victims of police brutality—settlements with the city or police insurance schemes. The police must pay. I defend this view by drawing on the theory of reparation developed in chapter 2. Simultaneously, I explain why policing is institutionally unique, in comparison to other public institutions. This explains why police injustice is especially expressive of master-like status, calling for redress by means of reparation. I conclude by explaining how police reparation complements abolitionist politics.

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was accepted for publication in the *Journal of Moral Philosophy* (2026).