Dennis C. Rasmussen

Short CV, updated September 2026

Syracuse University
Department of Political Science
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EDUCATION

Duke University
Ph.D., Political Science, 2005
M.A., Political Science, 2002
Dissertation: "The Problems and Promise of Commercial Society: Adam Smith's Response to Rousseau"
Committee: Ruth Grant (chair), Michael Gillespie, Tom Spragens, Neil De Marchi

Michigan State University
B.A., Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy (James Madison College), 2000
Graduated summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Honors College

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Syracuse University
Professor, Department of Political Science, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 2019–present
Hagerty Family Fellow, 2023–present
Director/co-director, Political Philosophy Program, 2020–present
Senior Research Associate, Campbell Public Affairs Institute, 2019–present

Tufts University
Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, 2018–2019
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, 2014–2018
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, 2009–2014

University of Houston
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and the Honors College, 2008–2009

Brown University
Postdoctoral Research Associate, Political Theory Project, 2007–2008

Bowdoin College
Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Government, 2005–2007

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Books

Frederick Douglass's American Founding: How the Nation's Fiercest Critic Embraced the Constitution. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2026. 202 pp.

- Named a book of the month in the *Wall Street Journal*
- Audiobook version available

The Constitution's Penman: Gouverneur Morris and the Creation of America's Basic Charter. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2023. Paperback edition issued in 2025. 272 pp.

- Runner-up for the *Journal of the American Revolution* Book of the Year Award

Fears of a Setting Sun: The Disillusionment of America's Founders. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. Paperback edition issued in 2022. 277 pp.

- Named a best politics book of the year in the *Wall Street Journal*
- Named a book of the week in *Publishers Weekly*
- Covered in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and other popular outlets
- Audiobook version available

The Infidel and the Professor: David Hume, Adam Smith, and the Friendship That Shaped Modern Thought. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017. Paperback edition issued in 2019. 336 pp.

- Shortlisted for the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award
- Named a book of the year in *The Guardian*, *Bloomberg*, *Five Books*, *Project Syndicate*, and *Australian Book Review*
- Named book of the week in *Times Higher Education*
- Covered in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and other popular outlets
- Subject of a symposium in *Rivista di filosofia*
- Subject of a Hume Society Conference book panel
- Translated into Spanish, Italian, Chinese, and Korean; French, Portuguese, and Turkish forthcoming
- Audiobook version available

The Pragmatic Enlightenment: Recovering the Liberalism of Hume, Smith, Montesquieu, and Voltaire. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Paperback edition issued in 2017. 357 pp.

- Subject of a symposium in the *Adam Smith Review*

The Problems and Promise of Commercial Society: Adam Smith's Response to Rousseau. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008. Paperback edition issued in 2009. 208 pp.

- Honorable Mention for the Delba Winthrop Award

Edited volumes

Adam Smith and the Death of David Hume: The "Letter to Strahan" and Related Texts, ed. Dennis C. Rasmussen. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2018. Paperback edition issued in 2020. 108 pp.

Adam Smith and Rousseau: Ethics, Politics, Economics, ed. Maria Pia Paganelli, Dennis C. Rasmussen, and Craig Smith. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018. Paperback edition issued in 2019. 336 pp.

Articles

"Adam Smith and the Prudence of a Legislator," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 42.2 (Winter 2025), 387–401.

"Mutual Sympathy, Hospitals, and Balls: David Hume's Objection to the 'Hinge' of Adam Smith's Moral Theory," *Adam Smith Review* 13 (2023), 63–77.

"Adam Smith on What Is Wrong with Economic Inequality," *American Political Science Review* 110.2 (May 2016), 342–52.

"If Rousseau Were Rich: Another Model of the Good Life," *History of Political Thought* 36.3 (Autumn 2015), 499–520.

"Burning Laws and Strangling Kings?: Voltaire and Diderot on the Perils of Rationalism in Politics," *Review of Politics* 73.1 (Winter 2011), 77–104.

"Rousseau's 'Philosophical Chemistry' and the Foundations of Adam Smith's Thought," *History of Political Thought* 27.4 (Autumn 2006), 620–41.

"Does 'Bettering Our Condition' Really Make Us Better Off?: Adam Smith on Progress and Happiness," *American Political Science Review* 100.3 (August 2006), 309–18.

Book chapters

"Smith's Correspondence," in *The Smithian Mind*, ed. Nir Ben-Moshe, Remy Debes, and Michelle Schwarze (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

"Virtue With and Without God: Adam Smith on Morality and Religious Belief," in *Smith's Tensions: Reexamining the Political Economy and Philosophy of Adam Smith*, ed. Peter J. Boettke, Kristen R. Collins, and Solomon M. Stein (Arlington, VA: Mercatus Center, 2026), 119–37.

"Rousseau and Hume: The Philosophical Quarrel," in *The Rousseauian Mind*, ed. Eve Grace and Christopher Kelly (New York: Routledge, 2019), 119–29.

"An Apology for Adam Smith, Friend of David Hume: The *Dialogues* Controversy," in *When in the Course of Human Events: 1776 at Home, Abroad, and in American Memory*, ed. Will R. Jordan (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2018), 57–75.

"Smith, Rousseau, and the True Spirit of a Republican," in *Adam Smith and Rousseau: Ethics, Politics, Economics*, ed. Maria Pia Paganelli, Dennis C. Rasmussen, and Craig Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 241–59.

"Contemporary Political Theory as an Anti-Enlightenment Project," in *Rethinking the Enlightenment: Between History, Philosophy, and Politics*, ed. Geoff Boucher and Henry Martyn Lloyd (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018), 39–59.

"Adam Smith and Rousseau: Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment," in *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith*, ed. Christopher J. Berry, Maria Pia Paganelli, and Craig Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 54–76.