

MEGAN K. DYER

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Political Science
Texas A&M University
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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Texas A&M University, 2017

Committee: Cary J. Nederman (chair), Diego A. von Vacano, Joseph D. Ura, Jennifer R. Mercieca
Dissertation: *Rousseau against Republicanisms: Political Community and Human Order at the Edge of a Tradition*
Fields: Political Theory, American Politics

B.A., Rhodes College, *summa cum laude*, 2007

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University, September 2017-present

PUBLICATIONS

“Machiavelli against Method: Feyerabend’s Anti-Rationalism and Machiavellian Political ‘Science.’” (with Cary J. Nederman) *History of European Ideas* 42, no 3 (2016): 430-445.

WORKING PAPERS

“The Bonds of Speech and Life: Language, Society, and the Wisdom of Human Relations in Rousseau’s Reception of Cicero.”

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Rousseau’s Augustinian Republicanism and the ‘True Constitution’ of the State.” Paper to be presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 2018 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 5-8 April 2018.

“The Bonds of Speech and Life: Language, Society, and the Wisdom of Human Relations in Rousseau’s Reception of Cicero.” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 2017 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 6-9 April 2017.

“The Triumph of Wisdom in Rousseau’s Reception of Cicero.” Paper presented at the American Political Science Association 2016 Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, 1-4 September 2016.

“Longing for the Republic: Rousseau’s Social Contract in Service of Civic Republicanism.” Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 2016 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 7-10 April 2016.

“Rousseau’s Augustinian Republicanism.” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 2015 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 16-19 April 2015.

“The First Convention: Political Community between Natural and Artificial.” Presented at the American Political Science Association 2014 Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 28-31 August 2014.

“Empire, Order, and Fortune.” Paper presented at Machiavelli Between Past and Future: On the 500th Anniversary of *The Prince*, Texas A&M University, 8-9 February 2014; the Midwest Political Science Association 2014 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 16-19 April 2014.

“Rousseau against Virtue Republicanism.” Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 2013 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 11-14 April 2013.

“Machiavelli against Method: Feyerabend’s Anti-Rationalism and Machiavellian Political ‘Science.’” (with Cary Nederman). Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 2012 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. 12-15 April 2012.

“The Politics of Science and the Science of Politics: Feyerabend, Pluralism, and Democratic Challenges.” Paper presented at the Western Political Science Association 2011 Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. 21-23 May 2011.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

Sole responsibility for course design, teaching, grading, writing instruction, and student advising.

Modern Political Thought, Texas A&M University: Fall 2017, Fall 2015, Fall 2014, Fall 2013.
writing intensive section: Spring 2014.

The Republican Tradition in Political Thought, Texas A&M University: Spring 2018, Fall 2017
American National Government, Texas A&M University: Fall 2017, Spring 2016, Fall 2014, Spring 2014.
State and Local Government, Texas A&M University: Fall 2018, Spring 2018, Spring 2017, Fall 2016.

Directed Studies

The Civic Tradition in the Late Enlightenment, Texas A&M University: Spring 2018

Teaching Assistant

American National Government, multiple sections, Texas A&M University: Spring 2015.

Guest Lecturer

Introduction to Political Theory, Texas A&M University: Spring 2017.

TEACHING INTERESTS

Political Theory

History of Political Thought, Classical and Early Political Thought, Modern Political Thought, American Political Thought, Democratic Theory, Religion and Politics, Liberalism

American Politics

American Government, Judicial Politics, the American Presidency, Constitutional Law

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Civic Republicanism, Early Modern Political Thought, History of Political Thought, The Enlightenment, Philosophy of Science, Political Economy and Statecraft

ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

Panel Chair, “Political Theory Applied to Comparative Politics Studies” (Lightning Talk) Midwest Political Science Association 2017 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 6-9 April 2017.

Panel Chair, “Exploring Modernity: New Work in the History of Political Thought” (Lightning Talk) Midwest Political Science Association 2017 Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 6-9 April 2017.

Panel Chair and Conference Assistant, Comparative Democratic Theory Workshop, Texas A&M University, 11-12 October 2013.

Research Assistant, Cary J. Nederman: *co-authorship of scholarly work; copy editing; conference organization*, Fall 2009-Spring 2013.

Research Assistant, Elisabeth H. Ellis: *manuscript editing, copy editing, bibliography compilation, and indexing for Elisabeth Ellis, ed. Kant’s Political Theory: Interpretations and Applications (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012); exploratory research; working group organization and coordination*, Fall 2009-Spring 2012.

Program Assistant, Interdisciplinary Program for Social, Cultural and Political Thought, Texas A&M University, Fall 2010-Spring 2012.

Facilities Coordinator, Association for Political Theory 2009 Annual Conference, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. 22-24 October 2009.

Participant, Glasscock Center for Humanities Research Grant Writing Workshop.

RESEARCH & TEACHING SKILLS

French

reading (full professional proficiency)

speaking (professional working proficiency)

Certified Researcher, Texas A&M Institutional Review Board, 2011-present

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Political Science Association

Foundations of Political Theory

Association for Political Theory

Midwest Political Science Association

AWARDS & HONORS

Regents Fellowship, Texas A&M University, 2009-2010.

Senior Seidman Award in Political Science, Rhodes College, 2007.

Phi Beta Kappa, Rhodes College, 2006.

Pi Delta Phi, National French Honor Society, Rhodes College, 2006.

First-Year Seidman Award in Political Science, Rhodes College, 2004.

REFERENCES

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

In my research, I am interested in broad questions of citizenship and the forces sustaining political and social order in a free state, and I approach such questions by examining historical and theoretical accounts of political community. My work here examines competing conceptions of republican liberty and civic virtue. In the last few decades, republican thought has come to prominence alongside attempts to revive civic life and ideals of active citizenship in a liberal-democratic polity. Indeed, one facet of the opinion that these are not particularly heady days for self-government is a concern for the declining civic capacity of modern individuals. Republicanism has been embraced as a tradition with resources that bear on these challenges.

My current work focuses on different lineages of republican thought and the various accounts of political liberty and order articulated therein. Now undergoing revision as a book project, my dissertation examines Jean-Jacques Rousseau's thought through the lens of civic republicanism. I argue that Rousseau's own republicanism critiques some of the more problematic features of republican thought. Beyond this, it also offers an account of the republic that can satisfy some of the more unsettling objections to republicanism.

Rousseau's relationship to the republican tradition is ambiguous; some scholars have instead seen a transformative politics or even an account of totalitarian democracy. I focus on the ways in which Rousseau engages a diversity of republican lineages by exploring his ideas alongside various accounts of the republic found in early modern political thought: a traditional, classical and Christian idea of the republic, the republican imperialism of Machiavelli, and the then burgeoning idea of the commercial republic. Through their considerations of problems of moral knowledge and true community, human order and power, and the passions as source of human sociability, these comparisons draw out important features of Rousseau's republicanism. Subsequently, I discuss Rousseau's own robust yet judicious account of the goods of human association and the benefits of a common life, and I conclude with an examination of his demand—in the face of human limitation—that all true republics be constituted according to justice and right. In reclaiming Rousseau's republicanism, this work acknowledges a more circumspect approach to the virtuous society: an account of the republic appreciative of the tenuous nature of political community and attentive to the troubling intimacy of religion and politics, militarism and imperialism, and closeness of money and power that can feature in republican thought.