

Michael LeBuffe

CONTACT  
INFORMATION

Department of Philosophy  
Texas A&M University  
College Station TX 77843  
[lebuffe@tamu.edu](mailto:lebuffe@tamu.edu)

RESEARCH  
INTERESTS

Early Modern Philosophy, Ethics, Political Philosophy

EDUCATION

2000 University of California, San Diego  
Ph.D., Philosophy

1991 Princeton University  
A.B., Philosophy

ACADEMIC  
POSITIONS

2009- Associate Professor of Philosophy and  
(2010) Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Texas A&M University

2006-2007 Visitor, School of Social Science  
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

2003-2009 Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Texas A&M University

2000-2003 Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Texas A&M University

2000 Lecturer, Department of Philosophy  
University of California, San Diego

PUBLICATIONS

**Book**

*From Bondage to Freedom: Spinoza on Human Excellence*  
Oxford University Press (2010).

**Articles**

“Theories about Consciousness in Spinoza’s *Ethics*,”  
*Philosophical Review* 119, 4 (2010), 531-563.

“Change and the Eternal Part of the Mind in Spinoza,”  
*Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010), 369-384.

- “Spinozistic Perfectionism,”  
*History of Philosophy Quarterly* 27, 4 (2010), 317-333.
- “Baruch Spinoza,” *Wiley-Blackwell’s International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Hugh LaFollette, publication date tba.
- “Paul Henri Baron d’Holbach,” in *Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century German Philosophers*, Manfred Kuehn and Heiner Klemme, ed. Continuum (2010).
- “Ethics and Reason,” in *The Routledge Companion to Ethics*, John Skorupski, ed. London: Routledge (2009).
- “The Anatomy of the Passions,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza’s Ethics*, Olli Koistinen, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2009).
- Review of Michael Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews (2009).
- “Spinoza’s Normative Ethics,”  
*The Canadian Journal of Philosophy* v. 37, n. 3 (2007), 371-392.
- “Hobbes’s Reply to the Fool,”  
*Philosophy Compass* 2, 1 (2007), 31-35.
- “Spinoza’s *Summum Bonum*,”  
*Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* v. 86, n. 2 (2005), 242-265.
- “Metaphysics, Renaissance to the Present,” in the *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Maryanne Cline Horowitz, ed. Charles Scribner’s Sons (2005), 1435-1439.
- Review of Steven Nadler, *Spinoza’s Ethics*, Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews (2005).
- “Why Spinoza Tells People to Try to Preserve Their Being,”  
*Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, v. 86 (2004), 119-145.

“Hobbes on the Origin of Obligation,”  
*British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, v. 11, n. 1 (2003), 15-39.

“Holbach,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2002). Substantive Revision, 2010.

“Spinoza’s Psychological Theory,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2001). Substantive Revisions, 2006, 2010.

IN PROGRESS

*Hobbes and Spinoza: Individual and State at the Birth of the Social Contract*. In this book, I argue that Hobbes and Spinoza—philosophers who formulated the first modern versions of social contract theory and shared a number of basic commitments—nevertheless depended upon strong, dramatically different conceptions of human nature. This difference explains, in large part, the differences between the authors’ conceptions of the state.

“Hobbes on the Generation of Commonwealth.” A standard approach to Hobbes’s account of the generation of commonwealth, which starts from a characterization of the largely egoistic motives of individuals and shows what kind of state arises from and suits such people, is inadequate. It fails to capture Hobbes’s most important theories about human psychology, which concern the passions and not desire. It also fails to capture the importance of religion as a problem for Hobbes. I defend an alternative approach and suggest that Hobbes faces questions different from and more interesting than those often posed.

“Wonder, Miracles and Monotheism in Spinoza’s *Theological Political Treatise*.” In this paper, I defend an account of role of miracles in the argument of the TTP. I argue that miracles cause consistent coordinated action in a way similar to that of the second kind of knowledge, reason. There is a basis for this surprising view in Spinoza’s theory of ideas in the *Ethics*.

PRESENTATIONS

“Spinoza’s Noble Lie and Atheism”  
Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association  
Chicago (April 2011)

“The Power of Imagination in Spinoza”  
Conference on Sociability, Communication, and the Power of Imagination, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
Maison Française d’Oxford (February 2011)

“Theories about Consciousness in the *Ethics*”

New England Colloquium in Early Modern Philosophy  
Harvard University (May 2009)

“Morals and War, Comments on Arash Abizadeh and Kinch Hoekstra,”

The Research Workshop on Thomas Hobbes.  
McGill University (March 2009)

"Spinozistic Perfectionism"

The South-Central Conference in Early Modern Philosophy  
Texas A&M University (October 2008)

"Natural and Formal Theories of the Good in the *Ethics*"

International Conference of the Spinoza Society  
Philipps University of Marburg (September 2008)

"Projectivism in Spinoza's *Ethics*: 3p9s and 3p39s"

Pacific Division Meeting  
American Philosophical Association (March 2008)

Comments on Robin Gaier, "On the Reconciliation of the Spinozistic  
Doctrine of the Eternality of the Mind and Monistic Parallelism"

Southwest Philosophical Association (November 2007)

Comments on Matt Kisner, “Spinoza on the Intelligence of the Passions”

Pacific Division, American Philosophical Association (March 2007)

“Representation in Spinoza’s Theory of the Imagination”

Southwest Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, UCSD (February 2007)

“Spinoza’s Normative Ethics”

School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study (November 2006)

Comments on Eugene Marshall, “Spinoza on Akrasia”

Central Division, American Philosophical Association (April 2006)

“Passive Joy”

The Midwestern Conference in Early Modern Philosophy

The University of Chicago (November 2005)

“Ideas of Imagination and Error in Spinoza’s Ethics”

Central Division, American Philosophical Association (April 2005)

“Consciousness in Spinoza’s Normative Ethics”

The South-Eastern Conference in Early Modern Philosophy

Hampden-Sydney College (November 2004)

“Rationalist Ethics”

The Yale Spinoza Study Group, Yale University (April 2004)

“Four Cartesian Theses about Sensory Ideas”

Pacific Division, American Philosophical Association (March 2004)

“Spinoza’s Rationalist Ethics”

The South-Central Conference in Early Modern Philosophy  
St. Louis University (September 2003)

Comments on Travis Smith, “On the Fourth Law of Nature”  
International Hobbes Association session, Pacific Division,  
American Philosophical Association (March 2003)

“Spinoza’s *Summum Bonum*”

The Intermountain Conference in Early Modern Philosophy at Utah State  
University (March 2000); The Central Division, American Philosophical  
Association (May 2001); Texas A&M University Colloquium (September  
2000); Texas Tech University Colloquium (March 2002)

“Hobbes’s Theory of Obligation”

The Intermountain Conference in Early Modern Philosophy  
Utah State University (May 1997)

TEACHING

**Graduate Seminars**

Imagination and Possibility in Modern Philosophy

Individual and State in Modern Philosophy

Spinoza's *Ethics*

Descartes

Modern Philosophy

**Undergraduate Courses**

Modern Philosophy

Nineteenth Century Philosophy

Medieval Philosophy

Seventeenth Century Philosophy

Contemporary Moral Issues

Environmental Ethics

Technology and Value

**Topics of Supervised Independent Graduate Work:**

Nominalism and Universals, Hobbes's ethical theory, Hume's *Treatise*, Leibniz's metaphysics, Sidgwick and Theories of Interest, T.H. Green and Kant, Spinoza.

GRANTS  
AND AWARDS

Melbern Glasscock Center, Undergraduate Enhancement Grant (2010)

Texas A&M College of Liberal Arts Civil Dialogue Grant (2010)

Texas A&M Association of Former Students College Level Teaching Award (2009)

Publication Support Grant Melbern Glasscock Center (2009)

Texas A&M Student Led Award for Teaching Excellence (2009)

Texas A&M VPR Program to Enhance Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant (2008)

Texas A&M VPR Program to Enhance Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant (2005)

NEH Institute Stipend (2004), "The Intersection of Philosophy, Science and Religion in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century," University of Wisconsin, Madison.

PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICE

Referee for Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, *Mind*, *Inquiry*, *Southwest Philosophy Review*, the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, the *Journal of Philosophical Research*, the *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, the South Central Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, the Southwest Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy

Conference Organizer, South Central Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy 2010.

Texas A&M Philosophy, Undergraduate Program Advisory Committee (2006- )

Director of the Undergraduate Studies, Texas A&M Philosophy (2010-)

Texas A&M College of Liberal Arts Undergraduate Instruction Committee (2010-)

Reviewer for the Program to Enhance Scholarly and Creative Activities, Office of the Vice President for Research, Texas A&M (2009)

Texas A&M Philosophy Department Steering Committee (2008-2009)

Chair of the examining committee, Texas A&M Philosophy Department comprehensive exam in the History of Philosophy (2008-)

Texas A&M, College of Liberal Arts Dean's Diversity Advisory Committee (2008)

Judge for the Susanne M. Glasscock Book Prize, Glasscock Center (2008)

Philosophy Department Representative to the Texas A&M Liberal Arts Council (2005-2006)

Undergraduate Advisor for the Department of Philosophy (2004-2005)