

**Molly Gurdon Pinkoski**  
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### **Research Areas**

**Areas of Specialization:** Ethics, Metaethics

**Areas of Competence:** Ancient Philosophy, Action Theory, Philosophy of Law, History of Ethics

### **Education**

**Columbia University**, New York, NY, USA

*Ph.D. in Philosophy*

Expected February 2024

*M.Phil in Philosophy*

May 2020

*M.A. in Philosophy*

May 2019

Dissertation: *Neo-Aristotelian Absolute Prohibitions*

Sponsor: Katja Vogt

My dissertation articulates and defends a novel conception of absolute moral prohibitions, along broadly Aristotelian lines. In the wake of Elizabeth Anscombe's famous arguments against consequentialist moral philosophy, the latter half of the 20th century saw a surge of philosophical interest in Aristotle's ethics. But few modern neo-Aristotelians take much interest in a view that Anscombe and Aristotle share: that there are specific kinds of actions that are inherently, and therefore always, wrong. Against the widespread view of absolute moral prohibitions as a primarily Kantian preoccupation, I argue that absolute prohibitions are an essential component of an Aristotelian ethical outlook, and that these prohibitions are both much more intuitive, and much more important, than is commonly thought. On my view, absolute prohibitions are best formulated not as transcendent laws of reason or divine commands, but as foundational principles for the kind of practical reasoning and affective dispositions necessary for living a good life.

**University of Oxford, Christ Church**, Oxford, U.K.

*B.A. in Philosophy and Modern Languages*

Thesis: "Love and Union in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*"

Supervisor: Thomas K. Johansen

### **Awards and Fellowships**

Bradley Graduate Fellow, 2022-present

Zephyr Institute Graduate Fellowship, 2021-2022

Barry Center Fellow, 2021-2022

Toby Strober Memorial Scholarship, Columbia University, 2020-2021

Institute for Humane Studies, Humane Studies Fellowship, 2018-2019, 2020-2021

Benjamin Wolstein Fellowship, Columbia University, 2018-2019, 2019-2020

### **Teaching**

**Ethics** *Spring 2021* (TA) Michele Moody-Adams

**Philosophy of Law** *Fall 2020* (TA) Michele Moody-Adams

**Introduction to Logic** *Spring 2020* (TA) John Morrison

**Aristotle** *Fall 2019* (TA) Katja Vogt

**Methods & Problems of Philosophy** *Spring 2019* (TA) Melissa Fusco

**Ethics** *Fall 2018* (TA) Katja Vogt

## **Talks and Presentations**

“Absolute Prohibitions and Moral Education”

- EPAM (Ethics and Politics, Ancient and Modern), Stanford University (May 2022)
- Research Group in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (August 2020)

“Kant’s Absolute Prohibitions”

- Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (September 2021)

“Learning in Love: What Motivates Us to Pursue Liberal Learning?”

- The Morningside Institute, April 2020

“Aristotelian Absolute Prohibitions”

- Wittgenstein: Law and Action, 11th Annual Conference of the British Wittgenstein Society, University of Surrey (Guildford, Surrey, July 2020) — postponed due to COVID-19
- Munich-New York City Workshop in Ethics, Columbia University (New York, March 2020)
- Research Group in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (video conference, July 2019)

## **Invited Commentaries**

Christine Korsgaard, “Animal Selves and the Good”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (October 2021)

Jens Timmermann, “Kant’s ‘Supposed Right to Lie’”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (November 2020)

Rachel Barney, “Becoming Bad: Aristotle on Vice and Moral Habituation”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (September 2019)

Justin Clarke-Doane, “Objectivity and Evaluation”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (October 2018)

Susan Sauvé Meyer, “Why Pleasure and Reason are not the Good: *Philebus* 20b-23b”

Workshop in Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy, Columbia University (October 2017)

## **Conferences**

“The Moral Imagination of the Novel” (New York, October 2019)

*Organizer*

Sponsors: The Morningside Institute, the Thomistic Institute, Columbia University Department of Philosophy

“Finding the Way to Truth: Sources, History, and Impact of the Meditative Tradition” (New York, February 2019)

*Discussant*

Sponsors: Center for New Narratives in Philosophy, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, the Departments of Philosophy, English and Comparative Literature, French, and the Maison Francaise at Columbia University

“Desire and the Good Life: Reflections on the Aristotelian Tradition” (New York, October 2018)

*Organizer*

Sponsors: The Morningside Institute, the Thomistic Institute, Columbia University Department of Philosophy

## **Selected Coursework**

**Virtue Ethics** Dhananjay Jagannathan\*

**Relativism** Carol Rovane\*  
**Ethics** Samuel Scheffler (NYU)  
**Self-Knowledge** Akeel Bilgrami  
**Metaethics** Katja Vogt\*  
**Practical Reason** Joseph Raz (CU Law)  
**Aristotelian Naturalisms** Dhananjay Jagannathan  
**Ancient Epistemology** Jessica Moss (NYU)  
**Problems in Political Philosophy** Joseph Raz (CU Law)

\*indicates audit

### **Referee**

*Nous, Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*

### **References**

Katja Vogt  
Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University  
**kv2101@columbia.edu**

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Joseph Straus Professor of Political Philosophy and Legal Theory, Columbia University  
**moody-adams@columbia.edu**

Dhananjay Jagannathan  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University  
**d.jagannathan@columbia.edu**

Axel Honneth  
Jack C. Weinstein Professor of the Humanities, Columbia University  
**ah2952@columbia.edu**