

**Krista Karbowski Thomason, Ph.D.**

Curriculum Vitae  
Swarthmore College  
Department of Philosophy  
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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:

Ethics, social and political philosophy, Kant's moral theory

AREAS OF COMPETENCE:

bioethics, philosophy of law, ancient philosophy, continental philosophy, feminist philosophy

EDUCATION

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign: Ph.D., October 2009

Thesis: "Rethinking Shame"

Committee: David Sussman (chair), Arthur Melnick, William Schroeder, Helga Varden

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign: MA, August 2006

University of North Carolina at Greensboro: BA, May 2002 (magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa)

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT: My dissertation defends the place of shame in moral psychology. I critique the two dominant accounts of shame in the current literature: the optimistic view, which states that shame is the experience of failing to live up to a virtue or excellence that one values, and the pessimistic view, which states that shame is always a distorted emotion like malice or envy. I argue that both views give unsatisfactory accounts of shame because they fail to distinguish circumstances when shame is intelligible from circumstances when it is appropriate. I offer an account of shame in which the key feature of the experience is loss of power or standing. I show that shame falls into a category of what I call *dismissive moral emotions* along with disgust, pity, and contempt. Unlike guilt and resentment, which are ways of demanding justification or redress from other moral agents, the dismissive moral emotions are ways of refusing these types of engagement. The questions arise whether these dismissive emotions are ever morally appropriate to feel towards others and towards oneself and whether extirpating shame from one's moral psychology counts as moral progress. The objections to shame are traditionally Kantian: since all persons are owed respect, it is morally impermissible to take dismissive attitudes toward them. I argue, however, that Kant rightly gives shame an important place in his moral theory, particularly in the "Doctrine of Virtue," and that according to a Kantian moral theory shame is essential to one's ethical life. I argue that feeling shame is morally appropriate, and I consider to what extent shame has a role in practices like punishment.

## PUBLICATIONS

“Shame and Contempt in Kant’s Moral Theory” forthcoming in *Kantian Review*

## PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

Participant in Hess Faculty Seminar at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, January 2012 entitled “Holocaust Geographies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust”

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### **Visiting Assistant Professor, Swarthmore College (current)**

PHIL 001 Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 011 Moral Philosophy; Fall 2011  
PHIL 001 Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 051 (cross-listed with Peace and Conflict Studies) Human Rights and Atrocity, PHIL 061 Race and Gender; Spring 2012

### **Visiting Assistant Professor, Mount Holyoke College**

PHIL 201 Ancient Philosophy, PHIL 205 Ethics: Fall 2010  
PHIL 255 Existentialism, PHIL 242 Social and Political Philosophy,  
PHIL 350 Topics in Philosophy: Revenge and Forgiveness: Spring 2010

### **Adjunct Instructor, Lamar University**

PHIL 1370 Introduction to Philosophy: Spring 2010, Fall 2009

### **Visiting Lecturer, McNeese State University**

PHI 201 Introduction to Philosophy: Spring 2010  
PHI 251 Ethical Decision Making (medical ethics): Spring 2010

### **Adjunct Instructor, Parkland College**

PHI 103 Introduction to Philosophy: Summer 2009  
PHI 105 Introduction to Ethics: Fall 2005  
PHI 100 Logic and Critical Thinking: Summer 2006

### **Graduate Instructor, University of Illinois**

PHIL 105 Introduction to Ethics: Fall 2007, Spring 2008, Fall 2008

### **Teaching Assistant, University of Illinois:**

PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy: Spring 2006, Spring 2007  
PHIL 104 Introduction to Ethics: Fall 2004  
PHIL 203 Ancient Philosophy: Fall 2006  
PHIL 380 Philosophical Feminism: Spring 2005  
PHIL 421 Ethical Theories: Fall 2005

## LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

Ancient Greek  
Latin

#### PAPERS IN PROGRESS:

“The Moralism of Constructive Shame” (under review)

Abstract: The traditional vision of shame suggests that it is the emotion we experience when we fail to live up to virtues that we value. Here, I suggest that although this optimistic version of shame shows its positive potential, this account inaccurately describes what shame really is. The claim that shame is a response to a lack of virtue cannot explain why agents often react to shame by doing something violent or why they can feel shame about possessing virtue. I offer a sketch of a new account that can capture these seemingly odd responses and conclude by showing how my view can shed new light on the shame that rape victims often experience.

“A Retributive Defense of Shaming Punishments” (in progress)

Abstract: Although most shaming punishments are often defended on grounds that they are effective deterrents or that they properly express public discontent, I argue that they can be justified on retributive grounds. Critics claim that shaming punishments conflict with the basic tenets of retributivism: rather than emphasizing the equal worth of persons, shaming punishments simply aim to humiliate. I argue instead the primary goal of shaming punishments is to damage the public reputation of the offender and that damaging someone’s reputation can still address the offender as a moral subject.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED:

“Kant and the Negative Emotions” at Kantian Ethics and Moral Life, University of Antwerp, Belgium, September 2012 (upcoming)

“Get Over It: Praising Fairness Over Forgiveness” at Pacific Division APA Meeting, April 2012 (upcoming)

“A Retributive Defense of Shaming Punishments” at Central Division APA Meeting, March 2011

“Autonomy and Pregnancy: Case Law and Pregnant Embodiment” at 27<sup>th</sup> International Social Philosophy Conference, July 2010

“The Role of Contempt in Kantian Ethics” at International Kant Congress, Pisa, Italy, May 2010 (Invited, but unable to attend due to British Airways strike)

“The Role of Contempt in Kantian Ethics” at the Eastern Division APA Meeting, December 2009

“Resurrecting the Scarlet Letter: The Role of Shame in Punishment” at 26<sup>th</sup> International Social Philosophy Conference in August 2009

#### FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

Philosophy Department Fellowship, University of Illinois, 2004-2005, Summer 2008, 2008-2009

Smalley Fellowship, University of Illinois, 2008-2009

Selected to University of Illinois List of Instructors Ranked “Excellent” by their students,  
Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008

Student Excellence Award, UNC-Greensboro, May 2002

Phi Beta Kappa, inducted April 2002

Roger A. Schwirck Award, for excellence in philosophy at UNC-Greensboro, April 2001

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND ORGANIZATIONS

Commentator for “Punishment, Fairness, and Forgiveness” by Zachary Hoskins at Eastern  
Division APA Meeting, December 2010

Commentator for “Kantian Supererogation” by Prof. Michael Byron at Central Division  
APA Meeting, February 2010

Graduate Philosophy Organization Representative at University of Illinois, 2004-2005

Graduate Philosophy Organization Secretary at University of Illinois, 2006-2007

Conference Chair for 30<sup>th</sup> Annual University of Illinois Graduate Conference, 2007-2008

Participant in University of Illinois Philosophy Department Ethics Workshop, 2006-2009

Member American Philosophical Association

Member Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love

Member North American Society of Social Philosophy

Member North American Kant Society

Reviewer for professional journal *Theoretical and Applied Ethics*

#### GRADUATE COURSE WORK

PHIL 421 Ethical Theories – James Wallace

PHIL 422 Recent Developments in Ethics (Constructivism) – David Sussman

PHIL 426 Metaphysics – Hugh Chandler

PHIL 410 Classical Ancient Philosophers (Platonic Metaphysics) – Richard Mohr

PHIL 436 Philosophy of Law and the State – Michael Moore

PHIL 511 Seminar Ethical Theory (Kant) – David Sussman

PHIL 435 Social Philosophy – Richard Mohr

PHIL 521 Contemporary Problems (Consciousness) – Arthur Melnick

PHIL 521 Contemporary Problems (Consequentialism and Deontology) – Michael Moore

PHIL 422 Recent Developments in Ethics (Moral Responsibility) – David Sussman  
PHIL 423 Philosophy of Art – Barbara Sattler  
PHIL 501 Seminar in History of Philosophy (Plato) – Richard Mohr  
PHIL 412 Classical Modern Philosophers (Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) – Arthur  
Melnick  
PHIL 453 Formal Logic – Bob Wengert  
PHIL 501 Seminar in the History of Philosophy (Hellenistic Philosophy) – Kirk Sanders  
PHIL 444 Topics in Recent European Philosophy (Max Scheler) – William Schroeder  
PHIL 511 Seminar in Ethical Theory (Moral Realism) – David Sussman  
PHIL 501 Seminar in History of Philosophy (Kant’s Theory of Personhood) – Arthur  
Melnick  
PHIL 525 Seminar in Philosophy of Mind (Self-Building) – William Schroeder (audit)  
PHIL 443 Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity – William Schroeder (audit)  
PHIL 521 Seminar in Feminist Philosophy – Helga Varden  
PHIL 422 Recent Developments in Ethics (Personal Identity) – David Sussman (audit)

REFERENCES:

David Sussman, Associate Professor (advisor)  
University of Illinois  
dsussman@illinois.edu, (217) 333-7251

Helga Varden, Assistant Professor (committee member)  
University of Illinois  
hvardeen@illinois.edu, (217) 244-2644

Arthur Melnick, Professor (committee member)  
University of Illinois  
amelnick@illinois.edu, (217) 333-4924

Peter Baumann, Chair (current colleague)  
Swarthmore College  
pbauman1@swarthmore.edu, (610) 328-8433