

Alexander Schaefer

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AOS Social and Political Philosophy
Political Economy
History of Political and Economic Thought

AOC Decision Theory
Ethical Theory
Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence

Academic Positions

2026- **Tulane University**
Assistant Professor,
Murphy Institute for Political Economy and Department of Philosophy

2023-2026 **State University of New York at Buffalo**
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy

2025 **New York University**
Visiting Researcher, Department of Economics

2021-2023 **New York University**
Research Fellow, Classical Liberal Institute

Education

2021 **University of Arizona**
Ph.D. Philosophy, Doctoral Minor in Economic Theory
Dissertation: *Coping with Complexity: Essays on Evolution and Institutions*
Committee: David Schmidtz (chair), Thomas Christiano, Justin Bruner, Vlad Tarko

2014 **University of Wisconsin - Madison**
B.A. Philosophy, Economics
Graduated with Comprehensive Honors
Senior honors thesis: "Selecting Naturalism: A Dilemma for Street's Dilemma"

Research

Peer-Reviewed
Journal Articles

“On the Coevolution of Game and Strategy” *Philosophy of Science* (forthcoming). (w/Justin Bruner and Ryan Muldoon)

“From Collection to Collective: Evolutionary Preconditions of the Organic State” *European Journal of Political Theory* (forthcoming). (w/John Horowitz)

“When Less is More: A Defense of Narrow, Humean Justice” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* (2026). (w/Otto Lehto)

“The Function of the Hypocrisy Norm” *Utilitas* (2025). (w/Matthew Jeffers)

“Expert Knowledge and the Administrative State” *Public Choice* (2025). (w/Jordan Lofthouse)

“Is Omnivorism a Form of Blameworthy Free Riding?” *Social Theory and Practice* (2025). (w/Mario Juárez García)

“Polycentricity and Adaptation: A Multilevel Selectionist Approach” *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* (2023).

“Does (Mis)communication Mitigate the Upshot of Diversity?” *PLOS ONE* (2023). (w/Ryan Muldoon and Keith Hankins)

“Is Justice a Fixed Point?” *American Journal of Political Science* (2023).

“Public Servants” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* (2022). (w/Mario Iván Juárez García)

“Exit & Isolation: Rousseau's State of Nature” *Synthese* (2022). (w/Mario Iván Juárez García)

“Unraveling into War: Trust and Social Preferences in Hobbes’s State of Nature.” *Economics and Philosophy* (2022). (w/Jin-yeong Sohn)

“Reasonable but Nonliberal: Another Route to Polycentrism.” *The Philosophical Quarterly* (2022).

“Hayek’s Twin Ideas” *The Cambridge Journal of Economics* (2021).

“Rationality, Uncertainty, and Unanimity: An Epistemic Critique of Contractarianism.” *Economics and Philosophy* (2021).

“Incoherent but Reasonable: A Defense of Truth-Abstinence in Political Liberalism.” *Social Theory and Practice* (2020).

(w/Wes Siscoe)

“The Lukewarm Religions of Rawls’s Overlapping Consensus.” *Aporia*, (2014).

Book Chapters

“The Birds and the Bees: Classical Liberalism(s) in Relation to Other Schools of Thought” in *The Routledge Companion to Classical Liberalism* (2026).

“Robust Reconciliation” in *New Approaches to Social Contract Theory: Liberty, Equality, Diversity, and the Open Society*. Oxford University Press (2024).

“The Problem of Complexity and the Emergence of Polycentric Political Order” in *Polycentric Governance and the Good Society: A Normative and Philosophical Investigation*. Lexington Books (2024). (w/Dries Daems)

“The Expressive Commons: Freedom of Expression as a Collective Action Problem” in *Exploring the Political Economy & Social Philosophy of Vincent & Elinor Ostrom*. Rowman and Littlefield (2020).

“Coping with Complexity: A Theory of Hayekian Interventionism” in *Interdisciplinary Studies of the Political Order: New Applications of Public Choice Theory*. Rowman and Littlefield (2019).

“Between Heteronomy and Anarchy: Kant’s Reformulation of the Social Contract” in *Kant and the Scottish Enlightenment*. Routledge (2017).

Edited Volumes

Polycentricity and Public Policy. Lexington Books (forthcoming). (w/Jordan Lofthouse and Roberta Q. Herzberg)

Book Reviews

Review of ***The Machinery of Government: Public Administration and the Liberal State***. In *The Independent Review* (2022).

Current Projects

The Invisible Hand. (under contract with Cambridge University Press)
Explores invisible hand explanations from historical and contemporary perspectives.

“Stasis and Flux in Moral Systems” (under review). (w/Justin Bruner and Ryan Muldoon)
Applies matrix analysis to demonstrate the inherent instability of social-moral systems.

“Dynamic Social Theory” (under review).

Defines and defends a new approach to the study of social morality.

“Lies in Disguise: Motivated Deceit in Hierarchical Structures”
(w/Jin Sohn and Jun Yi Peng) (in progress).

Develops a formal model of motivated information loss in bureaucratic settings.

Selected Presentations

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| 2025 | “Reconciling Methodological Individualism with Organic Theory”
<i>Invited talk at New York University</i> |
| | “Stability is Overrated: Towards a Dynamic Liberalism”
<i>Invited Talk at The London School of Economics in London, UK</i> |
| 2024 | “Dynamic Liberalism”
<i>Invited Talk at King’s College in London, UK</i> |
| 2023 | “The False Tradeoff between Expertise and Accountability”
<i>PPE Society Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA</i> |
| 2022 | “Cooperation, Trust, and Hypocrisy: A Game-theoretic Account”
<i>PPE Society Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA</i> |
| 2021 | “The Problem of Complexity and the Emergence of Polycentric Political Order”
<i>Public Choice Society Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN</i> |
| | “Multilevel Selection and Polycentric Organization”
<i>Southern Economic Association Annual Conference in Houston, TX</i> |
| 2019 | “What Can Social Complexity Teach Us about Cultural Evolution?”
<i>Santa Fe Institute’s CSSS in Santa Fe, NM</i> |
| 2017 | “The Expressive Commons: Free Expression as a Collective Action Problem”
<i>Mont Pelerin Society Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden</i> |
| | “The Unanimity Rule in Constitutional Choice”
<i>The Conditions for Social Order, Workshop at King’s College in London, UK</i> |
| | “Can Reasonable People be Incoherent? Rawlsian Constructivism and the Avoidance of Truth”
<i>Northwestern University Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics in Evanston, IL</i> |
| 2016 | “Sharon Street’s Adaptive-Link Account <i>is</i> a Tracking Account”
<i>Wisconsin Philosophical Association in Madison, WI</i> |

Selected Awards and Fellowships

2025	Department of Education Grant: “From Campus to Community: Civil Discourse as a Catalyst for Local Civic Renewal” <i>Member, PI Justin Bruner, \$4 million</i>
2024	John Templeton Foundation Grant: “Diversity, Dynamism and Inclusion: A New Multi-Method Approach for Studying Liberalism” <i>Member, co-PIs Ryan Muldoon and Jacob Neiheisel, \$2.5 million</i>
2024	Mellon Foundation Grant: “Inclusive Immigration and Democratic Revival in a Rust Belt City” <i>Member, PI Alex Oprea, \$500,000</i>
2024	Research Award: Business and the Good Society <i>Institute for Humane Studies, \$10,000</i>
2022	NEH Institute, David Hume in the 21st Century <i>National Endowment for the Humanities, Portland State University</i>
2021	Gerald Gaus Memorial PPE Essay Prize <i>PPE Society, for my essay “Is Justice a Fixed Point?”</i>
2020	AIER Visiting Research Fellowship Fall 2020 <i>American Institute for Economic Research</i>
2016-21	Adam Smith Fellowship <i>The Mercatus Center</i>
2016-21	Humane Studies Fellowship <i>The Institute for Humane Studies</i>
2015-21	Politics, Philosophy, Economics, and Law Fellowship <i>Center for the Philosophy of Freedom, University of Arizona</i>
2013, 2014	Draminski Award for Academic Excellence in Economics <i>Department of Economics, University of Wisconsin Madison</i>

Teaching

PHI 234, **Environmental Ethics**
The University at Buffalo.

PHI 111, **Ethics and Artificial Intelligence**
The University at Buffalo.

PHI 410/510, **Ethics and Social Norms**
The University at Buffalo.

PHI 350, **Political Economy**
The University at Buffalo.

PHI 341, **Social Philosophy**
The University at Buffalo.

LAW 11195, **Classical Liberalism: History, Theory, Contemporary Jurisprudence**
New York University, Co-instructor with Mario Rizzo.

PPEL 320, **The History of Economic Thought**
University of Arizona. Primary instructor.

PPEL 250, **The Social Contract**
University of Arizona. Primary instructor.

PPEL 205, **The Ethics and Economics of Wealth Creation**
University of Arizona. Teaching assistant.

PHIL 110, **Logic and Critical Thinking**
University of Arizona. Teaching assistant.

INDEPENDENT STUDIES: Fall 2023 (Advanced Graduate Study in Social Philosophy and Formal Methods), Spring 2024 (Advanced Graduate Study in Cultural Evolution), Fall 2025 (Graduate Readings on Property Rights in Indigenous Communities)

Academic Work

Scholar Participant and Discussion Leader for The Mercatus Center, 2023-Present
Engaged with students reading works on political economy and led discussions on these works in a virtual setting

Managing Assistant for Public Affairs Quarterly, 2021-2022
*Screened content, selected referees, and proofread accepted papers
Supervised by Jason Brennan*

Editorial Assistant for Social Philosophy & Policy, 2016-2021
*Communicated with authors, assisted with organization and execution of conferences
Supervised by David Schmidtz*

Graduate Fellow at The Alexis de Tocqueville Project, 2015

Contributed to workshop on Kant's Rechtslehre, helped with administrative tasks

Supervised by Chris W. Surprenant

Additional Information

Referee work	<i>Social Philosophy & Policy</i> (2018), <i>Public Affairs Quarterly</i> (2019), <i>The Independent Review</i> x 2 (2019, 2022), <i>Manuscrito</i> (2020), <i>Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics</i> x 2 (2021, 2025), <i>Politics, Philosophy & Economics</i> x 2 (2022, 2023), <i>Journal of Economic Methodology</i> (2022), <i>Cosmos + Taxis</i> (2022), <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i> (2022), <i>Public Choice</i> (2023), <i>Synthese</i> x 2 (2023, 2024), <i>Urban Affairs Review</i> (2023), <i>Journal of Special Economic Zones</i> (2023), <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> x 2 (2024, 2025), <i>Routledge</i> x 2 (2024), <i>Economics and Philosophy</i> x 5 (2024, 2025, 2025, 2025, 2026), <i>Æconomia</i> (2024), <i>European Economic Review</i> (2024), <i>Review of Behavioral Economics</i> (2024), <i>Humanities and Social Sciences Communications</i> (2025), <i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> (2025), <i>Public Choice</i> (2025), <i>Pacific Philosophical Quarterly</i> (2025), <i>Polis</i> (2025), <i>Contributions to Political Economy</i> (2025), <i>AI and Ethics</i> (2025), <i>Behavioral Public Policy</i> (2026), <i>Canadian Journal of Philosophy</i> (2026), <i>Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics</i> (2026), <i>Philosophia</i> (2026), <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> (2026)
Skills	Proficient in Spanish, French, LaTeX, R, MATLAB, NetLogo