

ÉTIENNE BROWN
Department of Philosophy
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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- Since 2019 **San José State University**
Assistant Professor (Tenure-Track), Department of Philosophy
- 2018-19 **University of Oxford**
SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow, Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics
- 2017-18 **Université de Montréal**
Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre de recherche en éthique (CRÉ)
- 2015-16 **Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris-IV)**
Research and Teaching Fellow (ATER), Department of Philosophy

AREAS OF INTEREST

SPECIALIZATIONS: Philosophy of Technology, Political Philosophy, Ethics

COMPETENCES: Philosophy of Law, Social Epistemology, 20th Century Continental Philosophy

EDUCATION

- 2016 **Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris-IV)**
Ph.D. in Philosophy
- 2016 **University of Pittsburgh**
Visiting Scholar
- 2014 **Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin**
Visiting Student
- 2011 **University of Ottawa**
M.A. in Philosophy
- 2009 **University of Ottawa**
B.Sc.Soc. in Philosophy and Political Science

PUBLICATIONS

Book

Moral Judgement. An Introduction Through Anglo-American, German and French Philosophy. London: Rowman & Littlefield International (2022).

Edited Book

Alain Renaut, Étienne Brown, Marie-Pauline Chartron and Geoffroy Lauvau, *Inégalités entre globalisation et particularisation.* Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne (2016).

Journal Articles

“Free Speech and the Legal Prohibition of Fake News,” *Social Theory & Practice* 49(1): 29-55 (2023).

“Disagreement, Epistemic Paralysis and the Legitimacy of Technocracy,” *Critical Review* 32 (1-3): 62-84 (2020) (co-authored with Zoe Phillips Williams).

Reprinted in Technocracy and the Epistemology of Human Behavior: The Debate over *Power Without Knowledge.* London: Routledge (2022).

“Kant’s Doctrine of the Highest Good: A Theologico-Political Interpretation,” *Kantian Review* 25(2): 193-217 (2020).

“‘Fake News’ and Conceptual Ethics,” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 16(2): 144-154 (2019).

“Propaganda, Misinformation and the Epistemic Value of Democracy,” *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society* 30(3-4): 194-218 (2018).

“Political Liberalism and the False Neutrality Objection,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 23(7): 874-893 (2018).

“Kantian Constructivism and the Normativity of Practical Identities,” *Dialogue. Canadian Philosophical Review* 57(3): 571-590 (2018).

“Aristotelian Virtue Ethics and the Normativity Challenge,” *Dialogue. Canadian Philosophical Review* 55(1): 131-150 (2016).

“Les inégalités ethnoculturelles après les théories de la justice,” *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 91: 377-398 (2016) (co-authored with A. Renaut, G. Lauvau and M.-P. Chartron).

Book Chapters

“The Only Reason to Do Anything: Online Trolling as the Deceptive Disruption of Joint Action.” In C. Fox and J. Saunders. *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Media Ethics*, p. 330-341. London: Routledge. (2024).

“Faire mienne la loi: remarques sur l’idéalisme métaéthique d’Alain Renaut.” In G. Lauvau and L. K. Sosoe, *Trajectoire de l’humanisme moderne*, p. 119-130. Paris: L’Harmattan (2023).

“Regulating the Spread of Online Misinformation.” In M. Hannon and J. de Ridder, *The Routledge Handbook of Political Epistemology*, p. 214-225. London: Routledge (2021).

“Civic Education in the Post-Truth Era: Intellectual Virtues and the Epistemic Threats of Social Media.” In C. Macleod and C. Tappolet, *Philosophical Perspectives on Moral and Civic Education: Shaping Citizens and their Schools*, p. 45-67. London: Routledge (2019).

“Émotions négatives et justice sociale.” In P. Savidan, *Dictionnaire des inégalités et de la justice sociale*, p. 454-461. Paris: Presses universitaires de France (2018) (co-authored with C. Tappolet).

“Justice ethnoculturelle et autodétermination : le cas des Autochtones du Canada.” In Alain Renaut *et al.*, *Inégalités entre globalisation et particularisation*, p. 487-504. Paris: Presses de l’université Paris-Sorbonne (2016).

“Une justice au-delà des tribunaux ? Finalités et enjeux des *Commissions vérité et réconciliation*.” In Kora Andrieu et Geoffroy Lauvau, *Quelle justice pour les peuples en transition ?*, p. 223-236. Paris: Presses de l’université Paris-Sorbonne (2014).

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

“AI beyond the shiny new models,” AI Futures Forum, SJSU, April 19, 2024.

“La liberté d’expression à l’épreuve de la recommandation algorithmique,” Department of Philosophy, University of Ottawa, April 5, 2024.

“Why (not) use AI in teaching?” Panel on Generative AI: Affordances and Limitations, SJSU, March 18, 2024.

“AI by the Humanities,” SJSU AI Research Cluster, March 15, 2024.

“Algorithmic Amplification and the Right to Reach”

- ECPR Political Theory Standing Group Seminar, February 7, 2024.
- Annual Conference of the PPE Society, New Orleans, November 2, 2023.
- Workshop on “The Computational and the Political,” Dartmouth College, October 24,
- Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association (APSA), Los Angeles, August 31, 2023 (online).
- Inaugural Conference of the Technology Ethics Exchange of the NorthEast (TeXne), Harvard University, May 18, 2023.
- Workshop on the Political Philosophy of Online Speech, Gould School of Law, University of Southern California, March 24, 2023.

“Toward a Political Philosophy of Content Moderation,” Research Presentation at TrustCon, San Francisco, July 13, 2023.

“Boundaries & Books: Defining Trust and Safety as a Field and Discussing the Role of Education,” Panel at TrustCon, San Francisco, July 12, 2023.

“Free Speech and the Legal Prohibition of Fake News,” recorded presentation for the *New Work in Philosophy* blog, posted on March 17, 2023.

“Désinformation et liberté d’expression,” Philosophy Department, University of Ottawa, March 10, 2023 (online).

“Digital Muffling and Democratic Justification,” Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence Workshop, Stanford University, January 28, 2023.

“An Egalitarian Ethics for AI,” Winter School for Public Ethics, Université Saint-Paul, January 25, 2023 (online).

“Moral Judgement: An Introduction through Anglo-American, French and German Philosophy,” Centre de recherche en éthique, Université de Montréal, January 17, 2023.

“Toward a Political Philosophy of Content Moderation,” presentation at H&A in San José, November 18, 2022 (online).

“Misinformation, Artificial Intelligence and Democracy,” Public Event on Artificial Intelligence and Democracy, Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method, London School of Economics, May 23, 2022 (online).

“La désinformation nous rend-elle moins libres ?,” Annual Meeting of the Quebec Philosophical Association, May 9, 2022 (online).

“Désinformation et liberté d’expression,” Philosophy Department, Université de Montréal, February 25, 2022.

“Online Trolling as the Deceptive Disruption of Joint Action,” Conceptual Foundations of Conflict Seminar Series, University of Southern California, December 1, 2021 (online).

“Disinformation during the COVID-19: Regulatory Challenges,” Panel at the International Global Humanitarian Technology Conference, October 19, 2021 (online).

“Regulating Speech on Social Media: An Ethical Dilemma for AI,” RSCA in Five: Faculty Short Talks, San José State University, March 5, 2021 (online).

Keynote address: “Is ‘Fake News’ (More Than) a Slur?,” XXXII Meeting of Philosophy and Theory of Human Sciences, São Paulo State University, Brazil, October 27, 2020 (online).

“Testimony, Free Speech, and the Legal Prohibition of Fake News,”

- Guest lecture at McGill University, Jarislowsky Chair for Human Nature and Technology, February 10, 2022 (online).
- Symposium at the Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Central Division), February 25, 2021 (online).
- Guest lecture at Northeastern University, Boston, February 8, 2021 (online).
- Colloquium at the Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division), Philadelphia, January 11, 2020.

“The Ethics of Online Trolling,” Annual Conference of the Society for Applied Philosophy, University of Cardiff, June 30, 2019.

“Dangerous Vaccines and Foreign-born Presidents: Challenges to the Legal Regulation of Online Misinformation,” Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, February 20, 2019.

“Misinformation and Freedom of Expression,” Centre for Ethics, University of Toronto, January 23, 2019 (online).

“Social Media and Deceptive Speech” (Guest lecture)

- European School of Political and Social Sciences, Lille, October 16, 2018.
- Ethics and Public Policy Graduate Seminar, Sciences Po Paris, October 15, 2018.

“Approximating the General Will: Kant on Self-Government and Representation,” Annual Conference of the Canadian Philosophical Association, Montréal, June 6, 2018.

“The People v. Fake News, or When Are Legal Prohibitions Against Misinformation Legitimate?,” MANCEPT Workshops, University of Manchester, September 11, 2018.

“Désinformation, fausses nouvelles et liberté d’expression,” Université Jean-Moulin, Lyon, March 2, 2018.

“Propaganda, Misinformation and the Epistemic Value of Democracy,” Political Epistemology Conference, Senate House, University of London, May 11, 2018.

**Research presentations given before 2018 are not listed.*

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2023 Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity Award for AY 2022-23 (SJSU)
- 2021 Public Voice Fellow at The OpEd Project (SJSU)
- 2018 Postdoctoral Scholarship, SSHRC (90 000 CAD)
- 2018 Postdoctoral Scholarship, FRQSC (100 000 CAD) (declined)
- 2013 Long-term Research Scholarship, German Academic Exchange Service (10 000 Euro)
- 2011 Doctoral Scholarship, SSHRC (80 000 CAD)
- 2011 Joseph-Armand Bombardier SSHRC Scholarship (105 000 CAD) (declined)
- 2011 Doctoral Scholarship, FRQSC (60 000 CAD) (declined)

RESEARCH GRANTS

Award from the SJSU RSCA Seed Grant Programme for a book project titled “Persuasion and Freedom: Technological Manipulation in Contemporary Political Thought” (6,020 USD).

Co-researcher at “Inégalités entre globalisation et particularisation (IGEP),” a project funded by the French National Agency for Research (100 000 €) (2012-2016).

COURSES TAUGHT

San José State University

Seminar in Philosophy of Law: Democratic Theory (Upper-Division)

Modern Philosophy (Lower-Division)

Seminar in Philosophy of Law: Freedom of Expression (Upper-Division)

Political Epistemology (Graduate Seminar)

Philosophy Graduate Pro-Seminar (Graduate Seminar) (x2)

Philosophy of Law (Upper-Division) (x2)

Computers, Ethics and Society (Upper-Division) (x6)

Science, Technology and Human Values (Upper-Division) (x2)

Université de Montréal

Philosophy of Law (x2)

Université Paris-Sorbonne

Contemporary Political Philosophy

History of Political Thought

Methodology and Critical Thinking

Université Panthéon-Assas (Law School)

Philosophy, Culture, and Society

STUDENT SUPERVISION

Ph.D. candidates hosted at San José State University:

Laurence Ricard (McGill University), “Fostering Recognition: A Philosophical Account of Child-Protection” (Spring 2021).

Directed readings with M.A. students at San José State University:

Mike Agostinelli, “Édouard Glissant’s *Poetics of Relation*” (Fall 2021).

Salvatore Curcio, “Édouard Glissant’s *Poetics of Relation*” (Fall 2021).

Brian Verduzco Rayo, “Privacy and Surveillance Capitalism” (Fall 2020).

Baltazar Lopez, “Artificial Intelligence and Algorithmic Injustice” (Spring 2020).

Senior theses supervised at the Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris-IV):

Anaïs Leveneur, “Justice and Digital Technologies” (2016).

Théophile Robert, “Rousseau’s Critique of Natural Law” (2016).

Mariam Bahaffou, “Rousseau’s Concept of Pain” (2016).

Valentin Letondeur, “Plural Voting in John Stuart Mill’s Philosophy” (2016).

Lucie Kervern, “Leo Strauss’s Concept of Natural Right” (2016).

TEACHING CERTIFICATIONS

SJSU Resilient Course Design Program (Summer, 2021).

SJSU Teach Online Summer Program (Summer, 2020).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

“La Silicon Valley a besoin d’un organisme de réglementation indépendant,” [Op-Ed](#) in *Le Devoir*, March 31, 2023.

Panelist at [Quickbites](#): A Forum for Urgent News (“Twitter: Democracy or Poison Pill?”), College of the Humanities and the Arts, San José State University, December 13, 2022.

Written [Interview](#) on the spread of misinformation on Elon Musk’s Twitter, SF Examiner, November 3, 2022.

Host, “The Ethical Risks of AI Development: A Conversation with Timnit Gebru,” Hammer Theater, San Jose, April 7, 2022.

“Alternatives to Facebook: Taking the ‘Big’ Out of ‘Big Tech,’” [Op-Ed](#) in *Newsweek*, March 7, 2022 (co-authored with Chelsea Thompto).

[Interview](#) on the role of social media in the 2021 Capitol insurrection, KQED-FM (NPR Bay Area), January 6, 2022.

“Facebook is creating a new digital divide,” [Op-Ed](#) in the *Toronto Star*, November 19, 2021.

Panelist at the McLaughlin College Union Debate on content moderation on social media, York University, November 11, 2021 (online).

Panelist at [Quickbites](#): A Forum for Urgent News (The Facebook Papers), College of the Humanities and the Arts, San José State University, November 17, 2021.

Written [interview](#) on the erosion of trust on social media, *San Jose Inside*, October 14, 2021.

Televised [interview](#) on the Facebook whistleblower’s revelations at KGO-TV (ABC SF Bay Area), October 5, 2021.

Podcast interview on the Ethics of Online Interaction, London School of Economics, [Ethics of AI Online Masterclass](#), May 27, 2021.

Podcast interview on Democracy and Artificial Intelligence, London School of Economics, [Ethics of AI Online Masterclass](#), May 27, 2021.

Televised [interview](#) on Twitter's ban against hate speech at KGO-TV (ABC SF Bay Area), February 15, 2021.

Televised [interview](#) on Facebook's campaign against COVID-19 misinformation at KGO-TV (ABC SF Bay Area), February 8, 2021.

Televised interview on the tech antitrust congressional hearing at KPIX-TV (CBS SF Bay Area), July 29, 2020.

Panelist at the Democracy Project, Discussion organized by Rhonda Holberton at San José State University, March 9 and October 16, 2020 (online).

Written [interview](#) on contact-tracing apps against COVID-19 in *Le Devoir*, June 10, 2020.

“Applications de traçage: il faut réfléchir à la notion de consentement,” [Op-Ed](#) on contact-tracing apps against COVID-19, *The Conversation* (Canadian French Edition), June 8, 2020.

Televised interview on the automation of food delivery at KTVU-TV (Fox News SF Bay Area), March 13, 2020.

“The Life They Never Chose: On Deciding Whether to Have Children in a Time of Pandemic,” blog contribution to *Pensar la Pandemia. Philosophize with a Mask International Project*, April 27, 2020.

Virtual conference on fake news and free speech at *Speakeasy*, March 24, 2020.

Panelist at the Richard and Sandiff Conniff Leaders in Business Ethics Speaker Series event on “Disinformation, Fake News and the Role of Technology Companies” (San José State University), February 19, 2020.

[Op-Ed](#) on religious neutrality in Quebec, *La Presse* (Montréal), October 19, 2017.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Administrative

Chair, Philosophy Department Chair Review Committee, Spring 2024.

University Pre-Law Co-Advisor, San José State University (ongoing since Spring 2022).

Co-director of the Philosophy M.A., Department of Philosophy, San José State University (ongoing since Spring 2020).

Elected Member of the Program Committee, American Philosophical Association (three-year term, Fall 2021 to Spring 2024).

Elected Member of the Committee on International Cooperation, American Philosophical Association (three-year term; Fall 2020 to Spring 2023).

Member of the Curriculum Committee, College of Humanities and the Arts, San José State University (two terms; AY 2021-2022 & AY 2023-2024).

General Education Assessment Coordinator for undergraduate courses on “Science, Technology & Human Values” and “Computers, Ethics & Society,” San José State University (ongoing since Fall 2019).

Search Committee Member, Assistant Professor in Philosophical Logic, San José State University (AY 2019-2020).

Co-Director of the “Ethics and Politics” Research Axis, Centre de recherche en éthique, Montréal (January to June 2018).

Secretary, Société de philosophie du Québec (January to September 2018).

Organization of Scientific Events

Founder and co-organizer of [PhilMod.org](https://philmod.org), an online community and speaker series devoted to the philosophical implications of content moderation (ongoing since January 2023)

Organizer, “Philosophy and Content Moderation,” Panel at the 2024 Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division), Portland.

Organizer, Book Symposium on J.P. Messina’s “Private Censorship” at the 2024 Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division), Portland.

Organizer, “Recent Work on Propaganda,” Panel at the 2023 Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division), San Francisco.

Organizer, “Social Media as Private Government,” Panel at the 2023 Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division), San Francisco.

Organizer, “Freedom of Speech on Social Media,” Panel at the 2022 Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division), Vancouver.

Organizer, “Epistemic Rights and Duties during Elections,” Panel at the 2022 Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division), Vancouver.

Co-organizer, “Prestige and Inclusion in Anglo-American Academic Philosophy,” Panel at the 2021 Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division) (online).

Organizer, “Speech and Counter Speech on Social Media,” Panel at the Annual Conference of the Society for Applied Philosophy, University of Cardiff, June 30, 2019.

Co-organizer, Conference on the Ethics and Politics of Online Interaction, University of Oxford, May 14-15, 2019.

Co-organizer, “Democracy in Crisis? Historical and Contemporary Perspectives,” Symposium at the Annual Congress of the Canadian Philosophical Association, Université du Québec à Montréal, June 6, 2018.

Co-organizer, Conference on Epistemic Democracy and Institutional Design, Université de Montréal. June 24-25, 2017.

Refereeing

Journals: *Ergo*, *Constellations*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Social Philosophy*, *Episteme*, *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Erkenntnis*, *Social Theory and Practice*, *European Journal of Political Theory*, *Kantian Review*, *Philosophy*, *Raisons Politiques*, *Les Ateliers de l'Éthique*, *Dialogue*, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *Philosophiques*.

Press: *Oxford University Press*.

Funding Bodies: *Canada Research Chairs Program*, *Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et Culture*.

Contributions to Student Life

Faculty-in-Residence, San José State University (three-year term; Fall 2019 to Spring 2022).

Faculty Mentor for the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (AY 2021-2022).

Panel Organizer, “How to become a tech ethicist in Silicon Valley?” University Housing, San José State University. November 10, 2021 (online).

Panelist, “How to choose the right graduate program,” Event organized by the College of Graduate Studies, San José State University, November 5, 2021 (online).

“The Ethics of Online Trolling,” Presentation at the 2021 SJSU Philosophy Department Alumni Conference, May 8, 2021 (online).

Panelist, “Preparing for Law School Applications,” Event organized by the Pre-Law Society, San José State University, November 2, 2020 (online).

“Regulating the Spread of Online Misinformation,” Presentation at the SJSU Philosophy Students Club, October 19, 2020 (online).

Consultancy Work

Member of the Working Group on the Societal Impact of AI, Conseil de l'innovation du Québec (Since August 2023).

Interviewed expert for a study on the impact of artificial intelligence on content moderation conducted by Google (August 2023).

Consultant for the Santa Clara County Hate Prevention and Inclusion Task Force (Fall 2021).

LANGUAGES

French (native speaker), English (proficiency), German (reading knowledge).

HONORARY AFFILIATIONS

Fellow of McLaughlin College, York University (Canada).