

Walter Joram Riker, Ph.D.

(updated Nov 14, 2025)

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of West Georgia, Associate Professor (tenured), Philosophy, 2016-
UWG Honors College Faculty Fellow, 2019-2020
University of West Georgia, Assistant Professor (tenure track), Philosophy, 2010-2016
University of West Georgia, Assistant Professor (limited term), Philosophy, 2008-2010.
Vanderbilt University, Lecturer (limited term), Philosophy, 2007-2008.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Tennessee, 2007.
M.A., Anthropology, Brandeis University, 1996.
B.A., Anthropology, California State University, Los Angeles, 1991.

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Political/Moral/Legal Philosophy, Human Rights, Democracy, Disobedience.

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Applied Ethics, Early Modern M&E.

PUBLICATIONS IN PROGRESS

Human Rights in Non-Democratic Societies. Under contract with Lexington Books.

PUBLICATIONS COMPLETED

BOOK: EDITED VOLUME

2009. *Coercion and the State*. Co-edited with David Reidy. Edited volume in Amintaphil's series *Philosophical Foundations of Law and Justice*, Dordrecht: Springer. 225 pp. Co-authored introduction (14 pages).

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES (SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS)

2024. "'Ok, Boomer' as Activism." *Journal for Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, forthcoming.

2015. "The Complicity Objection and the Return of Prescriptions." *Southwest Philosophy Review*, 31:1 (January), 207-216.

2014. "Human Rights without Political Participation?" *Human Rights Review*, 14:4, 369-390.

2014. "Towards Limits on Diversity in Press Freedom." *Journal for Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, 21:2, 1-13.

2009. "The Democratic Peace is Not Democratic: On Behalf of Rawls's Decent Peoples." *Political Studies*, 57:3, 617-638.

2006. "Reading (and Misreading) Rawls's Theory of Legitimacy." *Southwest Philosophy Review*, 22:1, 149-161.

2004. "Rawls's Decent Peoples and the Democratic Peace Thesis." *Social Philosophy Today*, 20, 137-153.

BOOK CHAPTERS (SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS)

2009. "Democratic Legitimacy and the Reasoned Will of the People." In D. Reidy and W. Riker, eds., *Coercion and the State*, Dordrecht: Springer, 77-94.

2005. "Food." Walter Riker & John Nolt (co-authors). In J. Nolt, ed., *A Land Imperiled: The Declining Health of the Southern Appalachian Bioregion*, University of Tennessee Press, 173-220.

ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES (OTHER PUBLICATIONS)

2015 (January). *The Rawls Lexicon*. J. Mandle and D. Reidy, eds. Cambridge University Press.

"Benevolent Absolutism."

"Common Good Conception of Justice."

"Democratic Peace Thesis."

"Lawrence Kohlberg."

"Liberal People."

"Philip Soper."

2011. *Encyclopedia of Global Justice*. D. Chatterjee, ed. Springer.

“Compatriot Partiality Thesis.”

“Explanatory Nationalism.”

“Liberal Nationalism.”

BOOK REVIEWS (OTHER PUBLICATIONS)

2018. Robert Talisse, *Engaging Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. In *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 15:4, 479-482.

2012. Stephanie Rutherford, *Governing the Wild: Ecotours of Power*. In *Environmental Philosophy*, 9:1, 149-152.

2010. J. Angelo Corlett, *Race, Rights and Justice*. In *Journal of Philosophy, Science and Law*, 10. Available at: <http://www6.miami.edu/ethics/jpsl/archives/bookReview/BRCorlett-Race-Rights-Justice.html>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2025. “Political Meritocracy and the Democratic Peace.” North American Society for Social Philosophy, 42nd International Social Philosophy Conference, El Paso, TX.

2025. “Complicity, Abortion, and Murder-for-Hire.” Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Annual Meeting, Norfolk, VA.

2023. “Avoiding the Complicity Objection.” Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Annual Meeting, Portland, OR.

2022. “‘Ok, Boomer’ as Activism.” North American Society for Social Philosophy, 39th International Social Philosophy Conference, Aston, PA.

2020. “Child Animal Cruelty?” Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

2019. “Walking Indistinct Paths.” UWG Innovations in Pedagogy Conference.

2016. “Is Genuineness Plus Helpful? On Justifying Conscience Exemptions in Health Care.” Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, 25th Annual Meeting, Reston, VA.

2014. “The Complicity Objection and the Return of Prescriptions.” Southwestern Philosophical Society, 76th Annual Meeting, Lawrence, Kansas.

2014. "The Complicity Objection and the Return of Prescriptions (Conscientious Refusal by Pharmacists)." Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, 23rd Annual Meeting, Jacksonville.
2013. "Can We Have Rights Without a Right to Political Participation?" Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis.
2012. "How Do Rawls's Benevolent Absolutisms Honor Human Rights?" North American Society for Social Philosophy, 29th Annual Social Philosophy Conference, Boston.
2012. "Does Famine Prevention Require a Free Press?" Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, 21st Annual Meeting, Cincinnati.
2011. "The Right to Subsistence: Famine Prevention and the Free Press." Ninth Annual Information Ethics Roundtable, University of Arizona.
2011. "Must Corporations Obey the Spirit of the Law?" Midsouth Philosophy Conference, University of Memphis.
2008. "Protecting the Environment from the Law? Why Humphrey's Irreversibility Defense of Direct Action Fails." American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, Main Program, Pasadena, CA.
2007. "Is Environmental Direct Action Against Legitimate Democratic Policies Justified?" University of Louisville, Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, Conference on Law, Ethics, and Life Sciences.
2006. "The End of Liberalism." Amintaphil Conference on Coercion, Justice and Democracy (American Section of the International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy), Washington University, St. Louis, MO.
2006. "Approaches to Teaching Applied Ethics." Workshop developed/managed with Bill Kabasenche. American Association of Philosophy Teachers, 16th Workshop/Conference, Washington, PA.
2006. "Student Religious Convictions in the Philosophy Class." Workshop developed/managed with Bill Kabasenche. American Association of Philosophy Teachers, 16th Workshop/Conference, Washington, PA.
2005. "Reading (and Misreading) Rawls's Theory of Legitimacy." Southwestern Philosophical Society, 67th Annual Meeting, Fayetteville, Arkansas.
2005. "Rawls's Liberal Principle of Legitimacy Revisited." North American Society for Social Philosophy, 22nd Annual Social Philosophy Conference, Troy, NY.
2005. "Three Approaches to Teaching Business Ethics." Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Annual Meeting, San Antonio.

2003. “Rawls’s Decent Peoples and the Democratic Peace Thesis.” American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, Mini-Conference on Global Justice, Pasadena, CA. (A substantially revised version of the paper presented earlier at NASSP 2003.)

2003. “Rawls’s Decent Peoples and the Democratic Peace Thesis.” North American Society for Social Philosophy, 20th Annual Social Philosophy Conference, Boston.

CONFERENCE COMMENTS

2013. Comment on Saythala Phonexayphova’s “Personal Autonomy and the Challenges of Subservience.” Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis.

2011. Comment on Donald Bruckner’s “Against the Tedium of Immortality.” Midsouth Philosophy Conference, University of Memphis.

2010. “Rawls on the Duty of Assistance, Duties of Justice, and Current Ways of Life: Response to Navin.” AMINTAPHIL Conference on Economic Justice (American Section of the International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy), Rochester Institute of Technology.

2010. “Pushing Singer’s Analogy: Response to Peard.” AMINTAPHIL Conference on Economic Justice (American Section of the International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy), Rochester Institute of Technology.

2007. “What is the Spirit of the Law? Comments for David Silver.” American Philosophical Association, Society for Business Ethics, Baltimore, MD. 20-minute response to Silver’s paper.

OTHER CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

2025. Session Chair, Technology, North American Society for Social Philosophy, 42nd International Social Philosophy Conference, El Paso, TX.

2022. Session Chair, North American Society for Social Philosophy, 39th International Social Philosophy Conference, Aston, PA.

2019. Presentation on High School Ethics Bowl. Annual Meeting, Georgia Council for the Social Studies. This group focuses on K-12 education.

2012. Session Chair, North American Society for Social Philosophy, 29th Annual Social Philosophy Conference, Boston.

2012. Session Chair, Philosophy in the Contemporary World, 19th Annual Conference, Helen, GA.

GRANTS

2017. Applied for Community Impact Grant (high school ethics bowl), Community Foundation of West Georgia.

2015. Presidential Development Grant, UWG, for travel to help determine feasibility of holding high school ethics bowl at UWG. \$794 plus \$100 matching from COAH.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AS REVIEWER

2022. Reviewed journal article for *Journal of Social Philosophy*.

2021. Reviewed journal article for *Social Theory and Practice*.

2021. Reviewed presentation abstracts (3) for Annual Meeting of Association for Professional and Practical Ethics.

2019. Reviewed journal article and revision for *Business Ethics Quarterly*.

2019. Reviewed journal article for *Sophia*.

2019. Reviewed presentation abstracts (3) for Annual Meeting of Association for Professional and Practical Ethics.

2018. Reviewed presentation abstracts (3) for Annual Meeting of Association for Professional and Practical Ethics.

2014. Reviewed journal article for *Political Studies*.

2012. Reviewed journal article for *Journal of International Political Theory*.

2011. Reviewed book manuscript (117,000 words) for Springer Verlag.

2010. Reviewed journal article for the *Review of International Studies*.

2010. Reviewed journal article for the *American Journal of Political Science*.

2010. Reviewed book proposal for Broadview Press.

2010. Reviewed journal article for *Business Ethics Quarterly*.

2009. Reviewed journal article for *Public Affairs Quarterly*.

2007. Reviewed journal article for *Social Philosophy Today*.

2005. Textbook review for Wadsworth Publishing. Reviewed Louis P. Pojman, *Philosophy: The Pursuit of Wisdom*, to make suggestions for 5th edition.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICE/ACTIVITY

2020. Judge, Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, National Championship Tournament, Atlanta, GA.

2019. Judge, Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, National Championship Tournament, Baltimore, MD.

2018. Judge, Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, National Championship Tournament, Chicago, IL.

2017. Judge, Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl, National Championship Tournament, Dallas TX.

2017 (Spring). Participated in pilot project for Mr. Ayo Brewer, Doctoral Candidate at Oral Roberts University. Reviewed and commented on questions Mr. Brewer was developing for semi-structured interviews.

2016 (Summer). Participant, Ethics Bowl Workshop, Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Indiana University, Bloomington.

2015. Judge, High School Ethics Bowl at University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

2022-present. Senate, Philosophy Representative.

2022-present. Senate, Faculty Development Committee.

2022. Faculty Status Committee (promotion to full).

2022 (Fall). College of Arts, Culture, and Scientific Inquiry, Executive Committee, Philosophy Representative.

2021. Philosophy Program Search Committee, Lecturer.

2021. Discussions regarding future of High School Ethics Bowl in Georgia. With A. Richardson (Director, National High School Ethics Bowl), E. Nahmias (Chair of Philosophy, Georgia State University), and A. Meskin (Philosophy Department Head, University of Georgia).

2019-20. COAH Online Services Subcommittee.

2019. Faculty Status Committee (promotion & tenure)

2019-20. Honors College Faculty Teaching Fellow.

2019 (January). Get on the Bus! COAH Recruiting Event. (“Do you *know* I’m Dr. Riker?”)

2018. Chair, Philosophy Program Search Committee, Lecturer.

2018-9, 2021-present. Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl team. Coach/organizer.

2018-2025. West Georgia High School Ethics Bowl. Organizer and director. Bowls held in 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025.

2018. American Democracy Project, Survey/Review of UWG community engagement projects.

2018. Philosophy Program Search Committee (with J. Garner), Lecturer (one-year replacement).

2017. Faculty Status Committee, Philosophy (promotion & tenure)

2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022. Ethics Awareness Week Committee.

2017. COAH Truth Year Event Committee.

2017 (Spring). Conducted Teaching Observation (Assistant Professor).

2017. Worked with Carrollton High School (Brewer) to arrange a visit by speaker/philosopher for COAH Theme Year on Truth.

2017 (Spring and Summer). Master’s Degree Thesis and Defense, External Reader.

2017 (March). Undergraduate Program Committee, substitute.

2016-2017 (Spring). Developed and built online Professional Ethics course (PHIL 4120) for eMajor.

2016-17. COAH Graduate Studies Subcommittee.

2016 (Fall-Spring). COAH College Day Subcommittee.

2016 (Summer). COAH Vision Statement. Developed new draft with K. Hibbard and P. Gagnon.

2016 (Spring)-17 (Fall). Service Learning Committee, a Provost Fellows Project.

2016 (Spring). Investigated process for offering internship course in Philosophy. Communicated with M. Gantner (VPAA's office), D. Williamson (Assoc. Dean of RCOB), R. Crutchfield (Government Liaison), M. Johnson (Criminology), C. Hartley (Philosophy, GSU), V. Hardin (Employer Relations), and I. Pounds (Career Services).

2016-2022. Representative, Philosophy, BOR/USG Philosophy and Religion Academic Advisory Committee.

2016 (Summer)-2019 (Summer). Program Director, Philosophy Program. (On leave Spring 2018.)

2016 (Fall). Conducted Teaching Observation (Lecturer).

2015-16. Chair, Philosophy Program Search Committee, Tenure-Track (Anc/Med/Rel)

2015-16. Chair, Philosophy Program Search Committee, Lecturer.

2015. Member, COAH Dean Evaluation Committee.

2014. Member, COAH Strategic Planning Committee.

2014-present. Advisor to Phi Sigma Tau, Honor Society for Philosophy.

2012-13. Member, UWG Faculty Senate.

2012-13. Member, UWG Faculty Development Council.

2012. Member, Ad-hoc Committee on Themed Years.

2011-12. Member, UWG COAH/RCOB Intercollegiate Collaboration Committee.

2011-14. Advisor to UWG Philosophical Society (undergraduate philosophy club).

2011, 2012. Judge for Humanities Research Day.

2010, 2011, 2012. Presenter for Excel Center "Success Seminar" on Critical Thinking Skills.

2010-present. UWG Philosophy Program Faculty Committee

COMMUNITY SERVICE

2019. Visited instructors at Heard County High School to help develop high school team.

2018. Arranged visits between Philosophy Program and International Baccalaureate classes at Douglas County High School. Three visits in Fall 2018, three more scheduled for Spring 2019.

2018 (Fall), 2019 (Spring). Visited International Baccalaureate classes at Douglas County High School.

2010. Georgia Educators Association of Radiation and Medical Imaging (GEARMI). Gave presentation on teaching ethics in the college classroom.

2007, 2008. Tennessee Governor's School for Science and Engineering, Assistant. Summer enrichment program for gifted high school students. "The Logic of Science."

UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUCTION

Critical Thinking (IMPACTS)

Introduction to Philosophy (IMPACTS)

Introduction to Ethics (IMPACTS)

Introduction to Ethics, Georgia Scholars' Institute (residential program for high-achieving high school students)

Junior Honors Colloquium: Engagement (HONR 3102)

WDYKA The Honors College: Human/Animal (XIDS 2002H)

Internship (Independent Study): Cobb County Mental Health Court (readings on forgiveness)

Independent Study: Human Rights and Democracy

Philosophy of Law

Political Philosophy

Moral Theories

Professional Ethics

Human Rights (Senior Seminar)

Political Obligation (Senior Seminar)

Early Modern Philosophy

Introduction to Ethical Theory

Contemporary Moral Problems

Business Ethics

Environmental Ethics

Contemporary Moral Problems

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION

2025. Kamryn Williams, "Safe Surfing." School of Humanities' Undergraduate Research Conference.

2021. Brant Entrekin, "Autonomy and Risk: A Defense of the Nozick Principles." National Council on Undergraduate Research, Undergraduate Research Conference.

2020. Brant Entrekin, "Autonomy and Risk: A Defense of the Nozick Principles." Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference. *Winner, Best Paper Prize.*

2016. Antoinette M. Nash. "The Issue with Legal Positivism: Shapiro's Failure to Account for Human Nature." Joint Meeting of the North Carolina Philosophical Society and the South Carolina Society for Philosophy.

2016. Alex Clark, "What's So Decent about a Consultation Hierarchy, and So Indecent about a Benevolent Absolutism?" Undergraduate Research Conference in English and Philosophy. Panel, Human Rights and Non-Democratic Societies.

2016. Amara McNeish, "Rawls's The Law of Peoples: Hinduism, Caste Systems and the Urgency of Urgent Rights." Undergraduate Research Conference in English and Philosophy. Panel, Human Rights and Non-Democratic Societies.

2016. Aaron Weddle, "Confucianism and Embodied Politics." Undergraduate Research Conference in English and Philosophy. Panel, Human Rights and Non-Democratic Societies.

2012. Kevin King, "Socrates and Law as One's Own." *Winner, Research Night, Humanities Division. Winner, Big Night, UWG.*

LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

German, *Zertifikat Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, Goethe Institut, 1997.