

# Christopher Penfield

## Curriculum Vitae

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Department of Classics, Philosophy and Religion  
Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, VA 24595

### Education

**Ph.D., Philosophy**, Purdue University, May 2015

Dissertation: *Foucault, Kant, Deleuze, and the Problem of Political Agency*

Committee: Daniel Smith (chair), William McBride, Christopher Yeomans, Todd May, Kevin Thompson

**M.A., Philosophy**, New School for Social Research, January 2008

Thesis: *The Tragic Experience of Unreason in Foucault's Histoire de la folie*

**B.A., Philosophy**, Haverford College, May 2002

### Academic Employment

**Assistant Professor of Philosophy**, Sweet Briar College

July 2017 – present

**Postdoctoral Scholar in Philosophy**, Purdue University (NEH Grant #RQ-249964)

September 2016 – July 2017

### Areas of Specialization

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century European Philosophy, Social and Political Philosophy

### Areas of Competence

Ethics, Philosophy of Art, Kant, Early Modern Philosophy

### Publications

#### **Edited Books**

1. Penfield, C., with Yubraj Aryal, Vernon Cisney, and Nicolae Morar (2016). *Between Foucault and Derrida*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

#### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

1. Penfield, C. (2016). 'Words and Images,' *In Focus: Parts of the Face: French Vocabulary Lesson 1961 by Larry Rivers*, Ed. Sophie Cras, Tate Research Publication.  
<<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/parts-of-the-face-french-vocabulary-lesson-larry-rivers/words-and-images>>.
2. Penfield, C. (2014). 'Toward a Theory of Transversal Politics: Deleuze and Foucault's Block of Becoming,' *Foucault Studies*, 17(Special Issue: Foucault and Deleuze): 134-172.  
<<http://rauli.cbs.dk/index.php/foucault-studies/article/view/4257>>.

#### **Book Chapters**

1. Penfield, C. (2017). 'Carceral, Capital, Power: The "Dark Side" of the Enlightenment in *Discipline and Punish*,' *Understanding Foucault, Understanding Modernism*, Ed. David Scott. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing. Pages 95-112.
2. Penfield, C. (2016). 'Introduction: Between Foucault and Derrida,' *Between Foucault and Derrida*. Pages 1-26.
3. Penfield, C. (2014). 'Critique,' *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*, Eds. Leonard Lawlor and John Nale. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pages 87-93.
4. Penfield, C. (2011). 'Foucault, Michel,' *Encyclopedia of Global Justice*, Ed. Deen K. Chatterjee. New York: Springer. Pages 365-367. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9160-5\\_453](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9160-5_453).

### **Book Reviews**

1. Penfield, C. (2017). Review of *Foucault/Derrida Fifty Years Later: The Futures of Genealogy, Deconstruction, and Politics*, Eds. Olivia Custer, Penelope Deutscher, and Samir Haddad, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2017.04.15. (~3500)  
<<http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/foucaultderrida-fifty-years-later-the-futures-of-genealogy-deconstruction-and-politics/>>.
2. Penfield, C. (2014). Review of *Rethinking Philosophy and Theology with Deleuze* by Brent Adkins and Paul R. Hinlicky, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2014.03.12. (~3000)  
<<http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/46783-rethinking-philosophy-and-theology-with-deleuze-a-new-cartography/>>.

### **Translations**

1. Penfield, C. (Forthcoming). Translation of *Foucault Seminars, 1985-1986* by Gilles Deleuze, 'Part II: Power,' to be published online by Purdue University with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. (~210,000)
2. Penfield, C. (2016). Translation of "“But Such People Are Insane”: On a Disputed Passage from the First Meditation' by Jean-Marie Beyssade, *Between Foucault and Derrida*. Pages 82-100.
3. Penfield, C. (2016). Translation of 'A Return to Descartes' First Meditation' by Michel Foucault, *Between Foucault and Derrida*. Pages 101-103.
4. Penfield, C. (2016). Translation of 'The Literary Birth of Biopolitics' by Judith Revel, *Biopower: Foucault and Beyond*, Eds. Nicolae Morar and Vernon Cisney. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pages 29-47.

### **Interviews**

1. Penfield, C. (2011). Interview with Lucius Outlaw, World Philosophy Day: UNESCO Initiatives. <<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/unesco/>>.
2. Penfield, C. (2011). Interview with Mamoussé Diagne (French), UNESCO Philosophy Conference, 'Africa and its Diaspora: Philosophical Dialogue Between Africa and the Americas.' <<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/unesco/>>.

### **Presentations**

1. 'Feminist Theories of Justice: Foucault and Young on Power, Injustice, and the Politics of Difference,' Invited Lectures, PHIL 463/563: Iris Marion Young, University of Oregon, April 20 and 25, 2017.
2. 'Foucault's Philosophy of Transformation,' Invited Lecture, PHIL 580: Philosophy of Liberation, Purdue University, November 17, 2015.

3. 'On the Self-Composition of a People: Foucault, Popular Revolt, and the War Machine,' Special Conference: The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, Purdue University, November 13, 2015.
4. 'Was Foucault a Liberal, a Radical, or Both? In Defense of Foucault as a Kantian Critic of Neoliberalism,' American Philosophical Association, 2015 Pacific Division Meeting, Vancouver, Canada, April 1, 2015.
5. 'Sublime and Moral Feeling as the *Rationes Cognoscendi* of Human Freedom,' North American Kant Society: Midwest Study Group, Fall 2014 Meeting, Washington University, October 26, 2014.
6. 'Foucault, Kant, and the Critique of Neoliberal Governmentality,' Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy Annual Conference, Simon Fraser University, October 4, 2014.
7. 'Mental Illness and Unreason in Foucault's *History of Madness*,' Invited Lecture, PHIL 680: Philosophy of Psychiatry, Purdue University, February 21, 2013.
8. 'Deleuze and Foucault's Block of Becoming,' Special Conference: Between Deleuze and Foucault, Purdue University, December 1, 2012.
9. 'Deleuze, Foucault, and the Thought of Transversal Resistance: The Case of Becoming-Queer,' Fifth International Deleuze Studies Conference, Tulane University, June 26, 2012.
10. "'Necessity to Philosophize": Africana Philosophy & Black Folk,' Roundtable Discussion with Lucius Outlaw, World Philosophy Day: UNESCO Initiatives, Purdue University, November 17, 2011.
11. 'Deleuze, Nietzsche, Spinoza: Toward an Ethics of Immanence and the Thought of Eternity,' workshop for the Babes-Bolyai University Department of Philosophy, organized by Ion Copoeru, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, May 15, 2010.
12. 'Hardt and Negri and the Problem of Ethico-Political Subjectivity,' Collegium Phaenomenologicum Participant's Conference, Città di Castello, Italy, July 11, 2009.
13. 'Immanent Ecologies: toward an "Ecosophic" Cartography of Place,' University of Washington Graduate Conference for Interdisciplinary Studies, May 22, 2009.
14. 'Kritik's Creative Dimension: Critical Theory as Ontological and Ethico-Political Practice,' Duquesne University Graduate Philosophy Conference, March 24, 2007.

### Teaching Experience

- Adjunct Instructor, Philosophy of Ethics (Online)**, Baker College, Spring–Fall 2016  
(3 quarters, 6 sections).
- Instructor, Ethics (Distance Learning)**, Purdue University, Summer 2011–Spring 2014  
(9 semesters, 10 sections).
- Instructor, Ethics**, Purdue University, Spring 2011.
- Instructor, Introduction to Philosophy**, Purdue University, Spring 2010, Fall 2010.
- Teaching Assistant, Philosophy and Law**, Purdue University, Fall 2009.
- Teaching Assistant, Introduction to Philosophy**, Purdue University, Fall 2008, Spring 2009.
- Adjunct Lecturer, Western Philosophy I**, Dowling College, Spring 2008.
- Adjunct Lecturer, Human Rights**, Dowling College, Fall 2007 (2 sections).
- Discussion Leader, Happiness, Virtue, and the Good Life**, Haverford College, Fall 2001.

### Awards

- Graduate Student Stipend, APA 2015 Pacific Division Meeting (\$400).
- The William L. McBride Graduate Student International Travel Grant, Department of Philosophy, Purdue University, 2010 (\$1000).
- Phi Beta Kappa Society, Elected Member, Haverford College, 2002.

Departmental Honors in Philosophy, Haverford College, 2002.

### **Foreign Language Competence**

French: fluency in reading, translation; advanced proficiency in writing, speaking.

### **Referee and Review Work**

Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.  
Columbia University Press, 2015.

### **University Service**

Organizer, World Philosophy Day: UNESCO Initiatives, Purdue University, November 17, 2011.  
Organizer, UNESCO Philosophy Conference, 'Africa and its Diaspora: Philosophical Dialogue Between Africa and the Americas,' Purdue University, April 18-20, 2011.  
Organizer, Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, New School for Social Research, April 2008.

### **Professional Affiliations**

Member of the American Philosophical Association since 2014  
Member of the North American Kant Society since 2014  
Member of the Society for Phenomenology and Existentialist Philosophy since 2014

### **References**

Daniel Smith, Professor of Philosophy  
Department of Philosophy, Purdue University  
(765) 494-4284; smith132@purdue.edu

Christopher Yeomans, Professor of Philosophy  
Department of Philosophy, Purdue University  
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Kevin Thompson, Associate Professor of Philosophy  
Department of Philosophy, DePaul University  
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Leonard Harris, Professor of Philosophy  
Department of Philosophy, Purdue University  
(765) 496-3860; lharris@purdue.edu

William McBride, Arthur G. Hansen Distinguished Professor of Philosophy  
Department of Philosophy, Purdue University  
(765) 494-4285; wmcbride@purdue.edu

### **Graduate Level Coursework**

20<sup>th</sup> Century European Philosophy:

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Foucault: Deconstruction and Postmodernism, Purdue University	D. Smith
Deleuze: Ethics of Immanence, Purdue University	D. Smith
Heidegger's <i>Being and Time</i> , Purdue University	C. Schrag
Levinas, New School for Social Research (NSSR)	S. Critchley
Time and Difference: Bergson & Deleuze, NSSR	E. Casey
Reading Foucault, NSSR	J. Miller
Philosophy of Art: The Visibility of Painting (audited), NSSR	N. de Warren
<b>19<sup>th</sup> Century European Philosophy:</b>	
Hegel's <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i> , Purdue University	C. Yeomans
Nietzsche as Critic and Affirmative Thinker, NSSR	Y. Yovel
Kierkegaard, NSSR	A. Heller
Emerson and Nietzsche (audited), NSSR	J. Miller
<b>Social and Political Philosophy:</b>	
Critical Theory: Race and Racism, Purdue University	L. Harris
Social and Political Philosophy, Purdue University	W. McBride
Philosophy of Social Science, Purdue University	L. Harris
Theories of the Political, NSSR	R. Forst, S. Critchley
On Ideology: Marx and Marxism, NSSR	A. Kalyvas
Political Philosophy and the Aesthetic Dimension, UC Berkeley Extension	F. Dolan
<b>Kant:</b>	
Seminar in Ethics: Kant's Ethics, Purdue University	P. Kain
Kant's <i>Critique of Judgment</i> , NSSR	J. Bernstein
Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , NSSR	J. Bernstein
<b>Early Modern Philosophy:</b>	
Hume's <i>Treatise</i> : British Empiricism, Purdue University	M. Jacovides
Leibniz's <i>Discourse</i> : Continental Rationalism, Purdue University	J. Cover
Spinoza's <i>Ethics</i> , NSSR	J. Klein
<b>Ancient Greek Philosophy:</b>	
Pre-Socratics: Advanced Greek Philosophy, Purdue University	P. Curd
Early Plato, NSSR	D. Nikulin
Philosophical Psychology: Ancient Greek Thinking on the Soul (audited), NSSR	C. Baracchi
<b>Philosophical Psychology, Philosophy of Mind:</b>	
Mind and Morality, Purdue University	D. Kelly
Mind and Reality, NSSR	R. Bernstein, A. Crary
Philosophical Psychology: Aristotle, Hume, Freud, Wittgenstein, NSSR	A. Heller
<b>Logic, Epistemology:</b>	
Symbolic Logic, Purdue University	D. Ulrich
Belief and Control, Purdue University	M. Steup
Modern Deductive Logic (audited), NSSR	S. Dasgupta

**Dissertation Abstract: Foucault, Kant, Deleuze, and the Problem of Political Agency**

Political agency concerns the transformation of the conditions of social organization through collective action. In order to treat the set of necessary conditions for such agency, I develop a detailed reconstruction of Michel Foucault's political philosophy, placed in relation to Kant and Gilles Deleuze. I argue that the key to Foucault's political thought is contained in two crucial but neglected concepts, *verticality* and *transversality*, and that the systematic exposition of these concepts yields an account of what must obtain for political agency to be possible, realizable, and sustainable.

The first part of my dissertation traces and analyzes the concept of verticality. Generally for Foucault, 'verticality' refers to either (1) an intensive form of experience or (2) a critical mode of thought, describing in both cases a kind of limit-relation. In the first case, it refers to a limit-experience irreducible to social or historical determination, e.g., the tragic experience of unreason expressed in literature. In the second case, it refers to a Nietzschean critique or 'history of limits' that shows how the exclusion of such experience plays a formative (but disavowed) role in western society. In chapter one I situate the philosophical foundations of vertical experience in Kant's Third Critique, analyzing the structure of the sublime as the distinctively modern form of tragic experience and, as the aesthetic expression of moral feeling, the *ratio cognoscendi* of human freedom. In chapter two I identify and elaborate Foucault's early concept of verticality, which allows him to pose the basic problem guiding his political philosophy of agency, viz., what I call *the problem of material expression*: how can that which is irreducible to history or exterior to society transform the historical conditions of the social order? I then present and assess Foucault's first solution to this problem, a literary politics of transgression, which fails because capitalist processes of commodification have divested literature of its critical political charge.

The second part of my dissertation articulates a different solution, which Foucault developed in concert with Deleuze: namely, the theory of transversal politics. In chapter three I show how Deleuze and Guattari advance the strategic aims of Foucault's literary politics while also diagnosing its particular failure, analyzing the operation of capitalism in terms of how it appropriates the subversive countercurrents that try to escape it. What is needed is a project of *transversal connection* to create lateral lines of alliance between these countercurrents that would reinforce and sustain them. I demonstrate how this project is pivotal for Foucault's analytic of power, according to which the primary function of modern power is to mutually adjust the processes of capital accumulation and social control. Since the dividing practices maintained between various popular segments of society help to perform this function, the strategy of transversal politics is to cross over these divisions by connecting a multiplicity of social movements that contest a common form of power. In chapter four I develop this account of transversal struggle through two examples: (1) the prison movement, which resists the capitalist production and racial coding of a criminal class; and (2) the queer movement to create new forms of community, which challenge neoliberalism's ethos of privatization.

The third part of my dissertation details Foucault's renewal of vertical politics, which works with transversal politics to provide a more complete solution to the problem of material expression. In chapter five I analyze Foucault's account of revolt as exemplary of the kind of transformative event that enables political agency. Revolt, I argue, is a collective form of vertical experience, a shared desire to insurrect against the intolerable, which constitutes an absolute limit of power's exercise, a potential rupture with the historical conditions of social organization, and the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom. If the vertical experience of popular uprising thus makes political agency possible, in turn, I claim that transversal connection designates the compositional principle necessary for organizing such a collective will and realizing it as a transformative force. I illustrate this claim by examining Foucault's engagement with the Iranian uprising, an example which also reveals a third condition: the need for collective self-criticism to counteract reactionary group tendencies toward exclusion and hierarchy. I argue, finally, that it is vertical critique itself, conceived broadly, that satisfies this condition required to sustain the movement of political agency. I conclude my dissertation with the general account of political agency's necessary conditions of possibility (collective vertical experience), realization (transversal connection), and sustainability (collective vertical critique).