

Paul Sagar

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM VITAE

8.05 Bush House (NE), Department of Political Economy, King's College London, WC2B 4BG
paul.sagar@kcl.ac.uk
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EMPLOYMENT

- King's College London** January 2018 – present
Reader in Political Theory, Department of Political Economy
- King's College, Cambridge** October 2014 – December 2017
Junior Research Fellow in Politics and International Relations
Visiting Scholar, University of California, Berkeley, February – April 2016

EDUCATION

- King's College, University of Cambridge** 2010 – 2014
PhD, Faculty of History (awarded October 2014)
Thesis title: 'Moral Psychology, Sociability, and the Foundations of Politics in David Hume's Science of Man'
Thesis Supervisor: Dr István Hont (to 2013)
Advisor: Professor John Robertson
External Examiner: Professor Jeremy Waldron
Internal Examiner: Professor Duncan Kelly
- University College London and Queen Mary, University of London** 2009 – 2010
MA in Intellectual History and the History of Political Thought (Pass with Distinction)
Dissertation: 'On the Content and Context of the Right to Punish in Hobbes's *Leviathan*'
Dissertation Supervisor: Professor Quentin Skinner
- Balliol College, University of Oxford** 2005 – 2008
BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics, Class I Honours
Fletcher Exhibitioner, 2007–2008

AWARDS AND PRIZES

- British and Irish Association for Political Thought Mid-Career Award for Outstanding Contributions to Research and Teaching, 2026 (first recipient of both the Early Career and Mid-Career Awards)
- British and Irish Association for Political Thought Early Career Award for Outstanding Contributions to Research and Teaching, 2020
- Shortlisted for the Political Studies Association Harrison Prize for the best article published in 2016, for 'From Scepticism to Liberalism: Bernard Williams, the Foundations of Liberalism, and Political Realism'

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

- Basic Equality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024)
- Adam Smith Reconsidered: History, Liberty, and the Foundations of Modern Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022)

- *The Opinion of Mankind: Sociability and the Theory of the State from Hobbes to Smith* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018)

Edited Volumes

- *Interpreting Adam Smith: Critical Essays* (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023)

Articles and Book Chapters

- 'Politics and Justice: Aristotle, Rawls, and the Case for Realism in Political Theory', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (forthcoming)
- 'The Values of the Carphone Warehouse', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 44:2 (forthcoming)
- 'How to be Happy: Advice from Adam Smith', in *The Smithean Mind*, ed. N. Ben-Moshe, R. Debes, and M. Schwarze (forthcoming)
- 'Adam Smith, David Hume, and the Problem of Moral Relativism', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 42:2 (2025), pp. 250–73
- 'Bernard Williams and the Relativism of Distance: A Defence', *European Journal of Philosophy* 33:3 (2025), pp. 837–53
- 'Adam Smith, Sufficiencyarian', in *Interpreting Adam Smith: Critical Essays*, ed. P. Sagar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 142–59
- 'On the Liberty of the Moderns: Adam Smith's Reply to Montesquieu and Hume', *Political Theory* 50:3 (2022), pp. 381–404
- 'Adam Smith's Genealogy of Religion', *History of European Ideas* 47:4 (2021), pp. 1061–78
- 'Between Virtue and Knavery: Hume and the Politics of Moderation', *Journal of Politics* 83:3 (2021), pp. 1097–113
- 'Don't Be Boring: Political Realism and Social Anthropology', *Contemporary Political Theory* 20:2 (2021), pp. 410–15 [critical exchange contribution]
- 'Adam Smith and the Conspiracy of the Merchants', *Global Intellectual History* 6:4 (2021), pp. 463–83
- 'Liberty, Nondomination, Markets', *Review of Politics* 81:3 (2019), pp. 409–34
- 'Bhishma's Boon: Reflections on the Complexity of Immortality', *Journal of Value Inquiry* 53:1 (2019), pp. 91–105
- 'István Hont and Political Theory', *European Journal of Political Theory* 17:4 (2018), pp. 476–500
- 'What is the Leviathan?', *Hobbes Studies* 31:2 (2018), pp. 75–92
- 'Smith and Rousseau, After Hume and Mandeville', *Political Theory* 46:1 (2018), pp. 29–58
- 'Legitimacy and Domination', in *Politics Recovered: Realist Thought in Theory and Practice*, ed. M. Sleet (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018)
- 'Beyond Sympathy: Smith's Rejection of Hume's Moral Theory', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25:4 (2017), pp. 681–705
- 'The State Without Sovereignty: Authority and Obligation in Hume's Political Philosophy', *History of Political Thought* 37:2 (2016), pp. 271–305
- 'From Scepticism to Liberalism: Bernard Williams, the Foundations of Liberalism, and Political Realism', *Political Studies* 64:2 (2016), pp. 368–84 [shortlisted for the PSA Harrison Prize]
- 'Of Mushrooms and Method: History and the Family in Hobbes's Science of Politics', *European Journal of Political Theory* 14:1 (2015), pp. 98–117
- 'Minding the Gap: Bernard Williams and David Hume on Living an Ethical Life', *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 11:5 (2014), pp. 615–38
- 'Sociability, Luxury and Sympathy: The Case of Archibald Campbell', *History of European Ideas* 39:6 (2013), pp. 791–814

Review Essays

- ‘Deserving Historical Legacy’, review of *Bernard Williams on Philosophy and History*, ed. M. Queloz and v. Ackeren, and *Bernard Williams on Law and Jurisprudence*, ed. D. Peixoto, J. Rabanos, and V. Rodriguez-Blanco, *History of European Ideas* (forthcoming)
- ‘Inheriting the Discourse’, review of István Hont, *Political Economy from Pufendorf to Marx: Culture, Needs, and Property Rights*, *History of European Ideas* (forthcoming)
- ‘Perils of Party’, review of Max Skjönsberg, *The Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, *European Journal of Political Theory* 23:1 (2024), pp. 125–31
- ‘From Cicero to the Science of Man’, review of Tim Stuart-Buttle, *From Moral Theology to Moral Philosophy: Cicero and Visions of Humanity from Locke to Hume*, *History of European Ideas* 47:1 (2021), pp. 168–74
- ‘Back to Basics’, review of Jeremy Waldron, *One Another’s Equals: The Basis of Human Equality*, and Andrea Sangiovanni, *Humanity Without Dignity: Moral Equality, Respect, and Human Rights*, *Contemporary Political Theory* 18:S3 (2019), pp. 153–8
- ‘Burke Unboxed’, review of David Bromwich, *The Intellectual Life of Edmund Burke: From the Sublime and Beautiful to the American Revolution*, and Richard Bourke, *Empire and Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke*, *Political Theory* 46:2 (2018), pp. 280–98

Selected Book Reviews

- Dan Edelstein, *The Revolution to Come: A History of an Idea from Thucydides to Lenin*, *Intellectual History Review* 36:2 (2026), pp. 419–21
- Darrin M. McMahon, *Equality: The History of an Elusive Idea*, *Journal of Modern History* 97:3 (2025), pp. 670–1
- David Lay Williams, *The Greatest of All Plagues: How Economic Inequality Shaped Political Thought from Plato to Marx*, *History of Political Economy* 57:3 (2025), pp. 524–6
- Stefan Eich, *The Currency of Politics: The Political Theory of Money from Aristotle to Keynes*, *Perspectives on Politics* (2022), pp. 1426–7
- Anne Phillips, *Unconditional Equals*, *Political Quarterly* 93:2 (2022), pp. 357–8
- Richard Whatmore, *Terrorists, Anarchists and Republicans: The Genevans and the Irish in Times of Revolution*, *History of European Ideas* 47:6 (2021), pp. 1038–40
- Judith N. Shklar, *On Political Obligation*, *Political Quarterly* 91:1 (2020), pp. 253–5
- Arash Abizadeh, *Hobbes and the Two Faces of Ethics*, *Hobbes Studies* 32:2 (2019), pp. 248–52
- Christopher J. Berry, *Essays on Hume, Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment*; Shinji Nohara, *Commerce and Strangers in Adam Smith*; Hye-Joon Yoon, *The Rhetoric of Tenses in Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations*, *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 26:4 (2019), pp. 812–16
- Alison McQueen, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times*, *Political Theory* 46:6 (2018), pp. 959–63
- Bernardo Zacka, *When the State Meets the Street: Public Service and Moral Agency*, *Political Quarterly* 89:2 (2018), pp. 339–40
- Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire*, *Political Studies Review* 15:4 (2017), pp. 613–14
- William Davies, *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty, and the Logic of Competition*, *Political Quarterly* 88:4 (2017), pp. 735–7
- Jacqueline A. Taylor, *Reflecting Subjects: Passion, Sympathy, and Society in Hume’s Philosophy*, *Political Theory* 45:4 (2017), pp. 577–81
- Anna Plassart, *The French Revolution in the Scottish Enlightenment*, *Global Intellectual History* 1:1 (2017), pp. 95–7

- Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Governments*, *Political Quarterly* 88:1 (2017), pp. 158–60
- Jeremy Waldron, *Political Political Theory: Essays on Institutions*, *Political Quarterly* 87:3 (2016), pp. 464–6
- Richard Tuck, *The Sleeping Sovereign: The Invention of Modern Democracy*, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 June 2016, p. 12
- Shalini Satkunanandan, *Extraordinary Responsibility: Politics Beyond the Moral Calculus*, *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 March 2016, p. 26
- Uwe Steinhoff (ed.), *Do All Persons Have Equal Moral Worth? On 'Basic Equality' and Equal Respect and Concern*, *Political Studies Review* 14:1 (2016), p. 77
- Richard Whatmore, *Against War and Empire: Geneva, Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century*, *Political Theory* 42:6 (2014), pp. 748–52
- Ulrike Heuer and Gerald Lang (eds.), *Luck, Value and Commitment: Themes from the Ethics of Bernard Williams*, *Political Studies Review* 12:1 (2014), pp. 98–9
- David Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power from Hobbes to Orwell*, *Journal of Intellectual History and Political Thought* 1 (2012), pp. 296–9
- John P. Wright, *Hume's A Treatise of Human Nature An Introduction*, *Teaching Philosophy* 34 (2011), pp. 189–92

WORK IN PROGRESS

- *Liberty: A Genealogy* (monograph in preparation), a pragmatic genealogy of the concept of liberty across Western political thought
- 'Adam Smith and Akrasia' (article under review), on Smith's account of general rules as a theory of ethical akrasia
- 'The Political Theory of Nostalgia: A Functionalist Account' (in progress)

INVITED TALKS

- 'The Macedonianism of Fear', Political Thought and Intellectual History Seminar, University of Cambridge, 12 November 2025
- 'How to be Happy: Advice from Adam Smith', Political Ideas Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, 14 May 2025
- Workshop on the manuscript of *Basic Equality*, Graduate Seminar, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (online), 26 October 2022
- 'Adam Smith and Brexit', Little Supper, The Caledonian Society of London, 16 January 2020
- 'Between Virtue and Knavery: Hume on the Politics of Moderation', Oxford Hume Society, 7 March 2019
- 'Adam Smith: The Politics of Wealth and the Problems of Commercial Society', New Methods, Perspectives, and Approaches Seminar, Bank of England, 4 September 2018
- 'From Enemies to Adversaries', keynote, London Graduate Conference in Moral Philosophy, King's College London, 4 May 2018
- 'Liberty, Nondomination, Markets', Political Philosophy Seminar, London School of Economics and Political Science, 11 January 2017
- 'István Hont and Political Theory', Cambridge Workshop in Political Theory, 17 October 2016; York Seminar in Political Theory, University of York, 31 January 2017; KU Leuven Early Career Workshop in History of Political Thought 1600–1800, 21 February 2017

- ‘Smith and Rousseau, After Hume and Mandeville’, Political Thought and Intellectual History Seminar, University of Cambridge, 19 October 2015; Departmental Seminar, UC Davis, 23 March 2016
- ‘The Reality of Moral Distinctions: Hume Against the Sceptics’, Early Career Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, 30 October 2013
- ‘From the Science of Man to the Science of Politics’, History of Political Thought Early Career Research Seminar, University of Oxford, 14 May 2013

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND WORKSHOPS

- ‘The Four Stages Theory’, Helsinki Early Career Workshop: Medieval and Early Modern Political Thought, 7 June 2019
- ‘Rousseau and Commercial Society?’, panel ‘Commercial Society Beyond the Scottish Enlightenment’, American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, 1 September 2017
- ‘Is Hobbes’s State a Person? A Reply to Runciman and Skinner’, British Academy Workshop on Hobbes and Personation, University of York, 6 September 2016
- ‘Humean Scepticism about Global Justice’, Intergenerational Justice: Historical Perspectives conference, University of Exeter, 2 June 2016
- ‘Is the Desire for Immortality a Desire Not to Die?’, Death and the Afterlife: An Interdisciplinary Symposium of Philosophy, Social Anthropology, and Political Theory, CRASSH, University of Cambridge, 22 January 2016
- ‘Legitimacy and Domination’, Rethinking Responsibility Ethics and Anthropology Workshop, Birkbeck, University of London, 14 June 2015; Realism and Moralism Workshop, University College London, August 2015
- ‘Hume’s Other Book About Politics: The *Treatise* and the Philosophical Foundations of a History of Opinion’, colloquium on Andrew Sabl’s *Hume’s Politics*, Queen Mary, University of London, 14 March 2014
- ‘From Pity to Sympathy: Archibald Campbell and David Hume, after Bernard Mandeville’, Scottish Reactions to Mandeville Conference, Princeton Theological Seminary, 9 March 2013
- ‘From Scepticism to Liberalism?’, British Realism and Political Thought Workshop, MANCEPT Workshops in Political Theory, 6 September 2012; Cambridge Political Philosophy Workshop, 16 November 2012
- ‘Sociability, History, and Method’, L’histoire intellectuelle: un dialogue entre historiographies française et britannique, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 15 March 2012
- ‘British Government Attitudes to British Tax Havens: An Examination of Whitehall Responses to the Growth of Tax Havens in British Dependent Territories 1967–75’ (with John Christensen), The Political Economy of Taxation conference, Loughborough University, 29 September 2010

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND SERVICE

- AI Lead, Department of Political Economy, and member of King’s College London Working Group on AI, September 2026 – present
- Associate Editor, *European Journal of Political Theory*, September 2026 – present
- Associate Editor, *Political Studies*, October 2020 – present
- Director of BA Politics, Department of Political Economy, King’s College London, January 2019 – September 2021, 2022–2023, and 2024 – present
- Organiser, workshop for *Interpreting Adam Smith: Critical Essays*, King’s College London, 10 January 2022

- Convenor, Political Theory Research Group, Department of Political Economy, King's College London, January 2018 – September 2021
- Co-editor (with Dr Christopher Brooke, University of Cambridge), special issue of the *European Journal of Political Theory* on 'István Hont and Political Theory', published November 2018
- Co-organiser (with Dr Ross Carroll, University of Exeter), panel 'Commercial Society Beyond the Scottish Enlightenment', American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 1 September 2017
- Full member of the Council of King's College, Cambridge (the college's executive body), 2017
- Co-convenor (with Dr John Filling), Cambridge Seminar for Political Thought (invited speaker series), Michaelmas Term 2016
- Organiser, Death and the Afterlife: An Interdisciplinary Symposium of Philosophy, Social Anthropology, and Political Theory, CRASSH, University of Cambridge, 22 January 2016
- Interviewer, King's College, Cambridge undergraduate admissions, December 2015, 2016, and 2017
- Convenor, Cambridge Workshop in Political Theory, Michaelmas Term 2015 and 2016
- Postdoctoral Representative, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge, 2014–2016
- Editorial assistant to Dr Michael Sonenscher and Dr Béla Kapossy in preparing István Hont's 2009 Carlyle Lectures for publication as *Politics in Commercial Society: Adam Smith and Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), spring 2014
- Co-convenor (with Dr Dmitri Levitin and Dr Sam James), Political Thought and Intellectual History Seminar 2, Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, 2012–2013
- Co-organiser (with Dr Edward Hall, LSE, and James Hodgson, York), Realism and Twentieth-Century British Political Thought Workshop, MANCEPT Workshops in Political Theory, 5–7 September 2012

TEACHING

Lecturing

- 'Freedom and the State', Department of Political Economy, King's College London (2026–27) [Module Convenor]
- 'Contemporary Issues in Political Theory', Department of Political Economy, King's College London (2022–23, 2024–25, 2025–26) [Module Convenor]
- 'Advanced Texts in the History of Political Thought', Department of Political Economy, King's College London (2024–25, 2025–26) [Module Convenor]
- 'Liberalism', Department of Political Economy, King's College London (2021–22 Semester 2, 2022–23 Semester 1) [Module Convenor]
- 'Advanced Texts in Political Theory', Department of Political Economy, King's College London (2019, 2020, 2022) [Module Convenor]
- 'History of Western Political Thought', Department of Political Economy, King's College London (2018, 2019, 2020, 2022) [Module Convenor]
- 'Introduction to Political Philosophy', Department of Political Economy, King's College London (5 lectures: 2018, 2019, 2020) [Module Convenor]
- 'From Idealism to Realism', Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cambridge (4 lectures: Michaelmas Term 2016)
- 'John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*', Faculty of Philosophy, University of Cambridge (8 lectures: Michaelmas Term 2015, Lent Term 2016)
- 'David Hume's Political Thought', Faculty of History, University of Cambridge (2 lectures: Michaelmas Term 2015)

Seminars and Small-Group Supervision

King's College London

- Undergraduate (first year): 'Introduction to Political Philosophy'
- Undergraduate (second year): 'History of Western Political Thought', 'Contemporary Issues in Political Theory', 'Freedom and the State'
- Undergraduate (third year): 'Advanced Texts in Political Theory', 'Liberalism', 'Advanced Texts in the History of Political Thought'
- Graduate: 'Methods in Political Theory'

University of Cambridge

- Undergraduate supervisor: The Analysis of Modern Politics (HSPS Tripos Part I, Paper 1)
- Undergraduate supervisor: The History of Political Thought c. 1700–1890
- Undergraduate supervisor: Ethics and World Politics (HSPS Tripos Part IIA, Pol. 3)
- Undergraduate supervisor: Set Texts (Philosophy Tripos Part I)

External Examining

- External Examiner, School of History, Queen Mary, University of London: MA in Intellectual History and the History of Political Thought (all modules) and BA modules in British History and the History of Political Thought, 2022
- MA co-examiner, dissertations for the MA in Intellectual History and the History of Political Thought, Queen Mary, University of London, 2018, 2019, 2022

Internal Examining

- BA examiner for all modules convened at King's College London, and numerous BA dissertations each year, 2018 – present
- MA co-examiner, dissertations for the MA in Public Policy and MA in Political Economy, King's College London, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022
- Primary examiner, timed examination paper 'The Modern State and its Alternatives', University of Cambridge, 2015, 2016, 2017
- MA co-examiner, coursework and dissertations for the MA in Political Thought and Intellectual History, University of Cambridge, 2015, 2016, 2017

LANGUAGES

- French (fluent)