

MATTHEW JAMES DELHEY

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Philosophy, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON (2024)
Dissertation: *Hegel's Theory of Institutions: A Study of Sittlichkeit*
Committee: Rebecca Comay (chair), Joseph Heath, William Paris
Examiners: Robert Gibbs, Mark Alznauer (Northwestern University, external reviewer)
- M.A. Philosophy, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA (2018)
Thesis: *Machine Automation and the Critique of Abstract Labor in Hegel's Mature Social Theory*
Committee: Sebastian Rand (chair), Peter Lindsay, Calvin Thomas
- M.Stat. Statistics, Rice University, Houston, TX (2015)
- B.A. Philosophy, Rice University, Houston, TX (2015)

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

18th and 19th Century Philosophy (esp. Hegel and German Idealism), Social and Political Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Early Modern Philosophy, 20th Century European Philosophy, Critical Social Theory, Philosophy of Technology, Ethics (esp. AI and Technology Ethics)

EMPLOYMENT

Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto, St. George (2024–2025)

PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

- “Apriorism and Scientific Cooperation in Hegel,” *Hegel Bulletin* (forthcoming)
- “Schelling’s Metametaphysical Critique of Hegel,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* (2024). [doi:10.1080/09672559.2024.2418619](https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2024.2418619).
- “Hölderlin’s Politics of the New Mythology,” *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 37, no. 3 (2023): 369–80. [doi:10.5325/jspecphil.37.3.0369](https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.37.3.0369).

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of Caleb J. Basnett, *Adorno, Politics, and the Aesthetic Animal*. *Phenomenological Reviews* (5/2022)

BOOK CHAPTERS AND CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

- “Institutions or Interaction? Hegel’s Critique of Fichte Reconsidered” (chapter in a collection edited by Benjamin Crowe and Gabriel Gottlieb, under review with De Gruyter Brill)
- “Hegel and Fichte on Institutional Content,” *Hegel-Jahrbuch*, edited by Brady Bowman, Myriam Gerhard, and Jure Zovko (expected 2026)

ARTICLES UNDER REVIEW

- “Institutions in the ‘French Sense’: Gustav Hugo and Hegel’s Institutionalization of Ethical Life” (journal article, submitted 5/2025)
- “Visions of Community at the University of Berlin: Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher” (journal article, submitted 6/2025)
- “The Liberal Subject in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*” (journal article, submitted 5/2025)

IN PREPARATION

- “Beyond Recognition—Hegel’s Institutional Ontology”
- “Wrong Institutions: On Hegel’s (Normative) Dispute with Gustav Hugo”
- “Hegel’s Critique of Abstract Labor”
- Hegel’s Theory of Institutions: Social Ontology, Transformation, and Critique in Ethical Life* (book manuscript)

PRESENTATIONS

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

- “Wrong Institutions: On Hegel’s (Normative) Dispute with Gustav Hugo”
The *Philosophy of Right* and Wrong: Hegel on Crime, Transgression, and Injustice, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law, Freiburg, Germany (9/2025)
- “Hegel’s Critique of Abstract Labor”
Canadian Philosophical Association, George Brown College, Toronto, ON (6/2025)
33rd International Hegel Congress of the Hegel Society: “Hegel and Freedom,” University of Warsaw, Poland (5/2020, postponed until 6/2021)
- “Visions of Community at the University of Berlin: Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher”
Kant and Post-Kantian Philosophy Group, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON (3/2025)
American Philosophical Association (comments by Robert Engelman), Eastern Division, New York, NY (1/2025)
62nd Meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY (9/2024)
- “Institutions in the ‘French Sense’: Gustav Hugo and Hegel’s Institutionalization of Ethical Life”
Department of Philosophy and Religion, Clemson University, Clemson, SC (2/2025)
German Philosophy Working Group, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON (2/2025)
- “Is All Negation Contradiction? Some Remarks on Hegel’s Dialectic”
5th Hegel en perspectiva Conference, “Dialectic & Contradiction,” University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain (6/2024)
- “Locke contra Hobbes on Opinion: A Social-Theoretic Defect of *Leviathan*?”
International Hobbes Association, Annual Meeting at the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, New York, NY (1/2024)
- “Apriorism and Scientific Cooperation in Hegel”
Internationale Hegel-Vereinigung, “The Self-Conception of Philosophy and its Relationship to the (Other) Sciences,” Stuttgart, Germany (6/2023)
- “The Liberal Subject in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*”
International Hobbes Association, Annual Meeting at the American Philosophical Association, Central Division, Denver, CO (2/2023)
- “Fichte’s Interactionism”

- American Philosophical Association (comments by Michael Nance), Eastern Division, Montreal, QC (1/2023)
- “Hölderlin’s Politics of the New Mythology”
60th Meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX (10/2022)
- “Institutions or Interaction? Hegel’s Critique of Fichte Reconsidered”
Association of Philosophy Students, University of Toronto, Scarborough (10/2022), Invited
34th International Hegel Congress of the Hegel Society: “The Spirit of Art and Culture,” University of Zadar, Croatia (9/2022)
15th Biennial Meeting of the North American Fichte Society: “Fichte’s Practical Philosophy,” DePaul University, Chicago, IL (5/2022)
Canadian Philosophical Association, Annual Meeting at the 2022 Annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (5/2022)
- “The Priority of Reciprocity: The Development of the Categories in Schelling’s *System of Transcendental Idealism*”
North American Schelling Society: “Schelling and Philosophies of Life,” Toronto, ON (5/2020, postponed until 5/2022)
American Philosophical Association (comments by Meghant Sudan), Pacific Division, San Francisco, CA (4/2020, postponed until 4/2021)
- “Is Hegel’s Hope for Machine Automation Consistent with His Social Theory?”
Graduate Student Conference, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA (4/2018)

COMMENTS

- On Peter Lindsay, *Ownership by Agreement*
Manuscript Workshop, Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA (5/2024)
- On Emmanuel Renault, “The Experience of Exploitation” (Book: *Abolir l’exploitation: Expériences, théories, stratégies* [La Découverte, 2023])
Workshop on “Labour and the Experience of Exploitation,” Jackman Humanities Institute: Program for the Arts, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON (4/2023)
- On Mark Alznauer, “Hegel on Philosophy as Radical Conceptual Amelioration”
Conference on “Hegel on Empirical Judgment”, online (6/2021)
- On Frank Ruda, “The Art of Vacillation”
Workshop on “Hegel and the End of Art,” Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON (2/2020)
- On Robert Stern, *The Radical Demand in Løgstrup’s Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 2019)
Workshop, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON (9/2019)

MODERATION

- Panel on Metaphysics, Canadian Philosophical Association, George Brown College, Toronto, ON (6/2025)
- Rosa Luxemburg Symposium, Society for Women of Ideas, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON (2/2024)

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Martha Lile Love Teaching Award for 2023–24, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto (2/2025), awarded to graduate instructor per year

Graduate Research Fellowship (8,500 CAD), The Joint Initiative in German and European Studies, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, University of Toronto (2023)
 Graduate Student Travel Stipend (300 USD), American Philosophical Association (2023)
 Research Grant (3,407 CAD), School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto (2023)
 Conference Grant (550 CAD), School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto (2023)
 Conference Grant (700 CAD), School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto (2022)
 DAAD University Summer Course Grant, Humboldt University Berlin (2021, declined due to COVID-19 Pandemic)
 Graduate Student Travel Stipend (400 USD), American Philosophical Association (2021)
 Kant and Post-Kantian German Philosophy Fellowship, Georgia State University (2016–2018), awarded to one incoming MA student per year
 Tsanoff Undergraduate Essay Prize Honorable Mention, Rice University (2014)

TEACHING

INSTRUCTOR

Topics in 20th-Century Continental Philosophy, University of Toronto, St. George (Summer 2025)
 3rd-year undergraduate course on institutions in recent Continental philosophy, online delivery (34 students)
 Law and Morality, University of Toronto, St. George (Spring 2025)
 2nd-year undergraduate course on the philosophy of law (277 students)
 Ethical Issues in Big Data, University of Toronto, St. George (Fall 2024)
 3rd-year undergraduate course on the ethics of AI, focusing on AI fairness, privacy, and explainability (27 students)
 Introduction to Continental Philosophy, University of Toronto, St. George (Summer 2024)
 2nd-year undergraduate course with a focus on the philosophy of technology in the Continental tradition (35 students)
 Contemporary Continental Philosophy, University of Toronto, St. George (Summer 2023)
 3rd-year undergraduate course on social critique (35 students)
 17th-and 18th-Century Philosophy, University of Toronto, St. George (Summer 2022)
 2nd-year undergraduate course on metaphysics, epistemology, and politics in early modern philosophy, online delivery (51 students)
 Philosophy of Human Sexuality, University of Toronto, Mississauga (Summer 2021)
 2nd-year undergraduate course on Plato, feminism, and psychoanalysis, online delivery (38 students)
 New Student Orientation, Georgia State University (Summer 2018)
 1st-year undergraduate course for incoming students to develop skills in presenting, writing, studying, and note-taking (23 students)
 Critical Thinking, Georgia State University (Spring 2018)
 1st-year undergraduate course on informal reasoning (83 students across 2 sections)
 Critical Thinking, Georgia State University (Fall 2017)
 1st-year undergraduate course on informal reasoning (126 students across 3 sections)
 Critical Thinking, Georgia State University (Summer 2017)
 1st-year undergraduate course on informal reasoning (23 students)

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT

(* = grading only; otherwise, tutorials also led)

Philosophy Essay Clinic, University of Toronto (Spring 2024, Spring 2023)
 Existentialism*, University of Toronto (Spring 2024)
 Pantheism and German Idealism*, University of Toronto (Spring 2023)
 Introduction to Political Philosophy, University of Toronto (Fall 2022, Fall 2021)
 Philosophy and Psychoanalytic Theory*, University of Toronto (Spring 2022)
 Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit**, University of Toronto (Spring 2021)
 Heidegger's *Being and Time**, University of Toronto (Spring 2021)
 Introduction to Continental Philosophy, University of Toronto (Fall 2020, Summer 2019)
 17th-and 18th-Century Philosophy, University of Toronto (Summer 2020)
 Ancient Philosophy, University of Toronto (Fall 2019, Spring 2020)
 Law and Morality, University of Toronto (Spring 2019)
 Aesthetics*, University of Toronto (Fall 2018)
 Introduction to Philosophy, Georgia State University (Summer 2018)
 Existentialism*, Georgia State University (Fall 2017)

ACADEMIC SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

PhD Professional Development Cohort Program, Faculty of Arts & Sciences, University of Toronto (2024)
 Incoming Graduate Student Mentor, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto (2021–2023)
 Mentored three incoming graduate students with regular meetings
 Member, Graduate Executive Committee, University of Toronto (2018–2019)

ACADEMIC SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Invited Seminar on Marx's "Fragment on Machines," George Washington Forum, Ohio University (5/2025)
 Book Proposal Referee, Routledge (10/2024)
 Graduate Student Participant, Summer Institute for Underrepresented Students in Philosophy, Canadian Philosophical Association, Toronto, ON (5/2024)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Philosophical Association (APA), Canadian Philosophical Association (CPA-ACP), Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP)

ORGANIZED CONFERENCES & TALKS

Co-organizer, "Dramaturgies of Resistance: The Labour of the Negative," Event Series (10,000 CAD), Jackman Humanities Institute: Program for the Arts (2022–2023)
 Participants: Nick Nesbitt, Michael Heinrich, Ling Zhang, Emmanuel Renault
 Co-organizer, "Dramaturgies of Resistance: Collectivity, Performance, Dialectics," Event Series (10,000 CAD), Jackman Humanities Institute: Program for the Arts (2020–2021)
 Participants: Hito Steyerl, Otolith Group, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Tacita Dean
 Co-organizer, "Reconstructing Reason: Developing the Concept of Reason through History," 19th Annual Graduate Philosophy Conference, University of Toronto (11/2019)
 Keynote speakers: Robert Brandom and Susan Haack

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**

Rara-Lesesaal, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Haus Unter den Linden, Berlin, Germany (6/2023)
 Sonderlesesaal, Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg, Freiburg, German (6/2023)
 Hegel-Archiv, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany (6/2023)
 Hölderlin-Archiv, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Germany (5/2023)

RESEARCH EMPLOYMENT

Graduate Research Assistant, Sebastian Rand, Georgia State University (2017)

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Collegium Phaenomenologicum, 45th Annual Session on *Cosmology and Cosmopolitanism*,
 directed by Kristi Sweet, Città di Castello, Italy (7/2023)
 Internationaler Sommerkurs, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany
 (8/2022)

LANGUAGES

German (reading)

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS OUTSIDE PHILOSOPHY

Data Scientist, Tripadvisor, Boston, MA (2015–2016)

REFERENCES

Rebecca Comay (dissertation supervisor)
 University of Toronto
 Professor of Philosophy and Comparative
 Literature
 rebecca.comay@utoronto.ca

Joseph Heath
 University of Toronto
 Professor of Philosophy
 joseph.heath@utoronto.ca

William Paris
 University of Toronto
 Assistant Professor of Philosophy
 william.paris@utoronto.ca

Mark Alznauer
 Northwestern University
 Associate Professor of Philosophy
 m-alznauer@northwestern.edu

Gurpreet Rattan (teaching reference)
 University of Toronto
 Professor of Philosophy
 gurpreet.rattan@utoronto.ca

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Hegel's Theory of Institutions: A Study of Sittlichkeit

Hegel's institutionalization of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) across the spheres of the family, civil society, and the state is regarded as among his most important contributions to philosophy. In this study, I show that Hegel understands institutions to be rational social forms. Institutions, such as marriage, the corporation, and sovereignty, are concrete forms that order social life according to its immanent telos, the realization of human freedom.

For Hegel, I argue, institutions must be understood ontologically (Chapter 3) and normatively (Chapter 4). In doing so, he unifies the two institutional paradigms that precede him: the French institutional tradition, exemplified by Montesquieu and Rousseau, and the German one, represented by Gustav Hugo and Kant (Chapters 1 and 2).

Ontologically, institutions are, for Hegel, meso-level social structures that combine a mode of being with a social function. For example, marriage is a social relation that functions to spiritually unite two spouses; the corporation is an association that functions to establish internal order and mutual respect among its members. Against the views of contemporary social ontologists, such as John Searle and Vincent Descombes, these forms have an existence that is ontologically objective, similar to other social phenomena like economic recessions and racism, because their existence does not depend on people's attitudes about the institution itself.

Normatively, institutions are both transcendental conditions of human sociality and teleological conditions of human freedom. Challenging the prevailing readings of normativity in Hegel, I argue that Hegel distinguishes between two kinds of institutional critique. The first is scientific critique, which has a limited scope and derives from the concept of the institution in question. The second is political critique, which is wider-sweeping and derives from one's membership in an ethical community, but is always open to contestation by others, and so cannot achieve certainty. By distinguishing between these two forms of institutional critique, Hegel limits science to make room for politics.

Hegel's institutional theory should be compelling to us today, I conclude, because it accounts for the nature, necessity, and objectivity of institutions in human life and provides a normative foundation for social critique. Appreciating Hegel's theory will aid us in rethinking institutions and inspire new directions in social research.