David Wiens — Curriculum Vitae

Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive, Social Sciences Building 387, #0521,
La Jolla, CA 92093-0521
dwiens@ucsd.edu www.dwiens.com

Academic Positions

Current

University of California, San Diego

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science	since 2017
Faculty Affiliate, Department of Philosophy	2016
Faculty Affiliate, Halıcıoğlu Data Science Institute	2018
Faculty Affiliate, Computational Social Science Program	2021
Member, Institute for Practical Ethics	2018

Past

University of California, San Diego

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science	2013–2017

Australian National University

Academic Visitor, School of Philosophy	2018, 2023
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Philosophy	2011–2013

Education

University of Michigan

PhD, Philosophy	2011
MA, Political Science	2011

Texas A&M University

MA, Philosophy	2006

Brock University

BA, Philosophy & History	2004

Publications

Book

2025 **From the Best to the Rest: Idealistic Thinking in a Non-Ideal World**
Oxford University Press (part of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics series)

Journal Articles

Forthc. **Pursuing Social Progress: The Question of Orientation**
(with K. Hankins and R. Muldoon) *Economics and Philosophy* (forthcoming)

Utilitarianism Does Not Dominate: A Response to Chung
(with R. Shibata) *Economics and Philosophy* (forthcoming)

2025 **Beyond Ideal Theory: A Framework for Methodological Debates**
Philosophy Compass 20 (6): e70046

Making Fair Comparisons in Political Theory
(with S. Ingham) *American Journal of Political Science* 69 (2): 594–606

2023 **Against Ideal Guidance, Again: A Reply to Erman and Möller**
Journal of Politics 85 (2): 784–788

2022 **The Stability of the Just Society: Why Fixed Point Theorems Are Beside The Point**
(with S. Ingham) *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 23 (2): 312–19

Devoting Ourselves to the Manifestly Unattainable
(with N. Southwood) *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 104 (3): 696–716

2021 **Demographic Objections to Epistocracy: A Generalization**
(with S. Ingham) *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 49 (4): 323–349

2020 **Morals from Rationality Alone? Some Doubts**
(with J.P. Messina) *Politics, Philosophy, and Economics* 19 (3): 248–273

The General Theory of Second Best Is More General Than You Think
Philosophers' Imprint 20 (5): 1–26

2018 **The Tyranny of a Metaphor**
Cosmos + Taxis 5 (2): 13–28
Symposium on Gerald Gaus's *The Tyranny of the Ideal* (Princeton UP, 2016)

2017 **Cosmopolitanism and Competition: Probing the Limits of Egalitarian Justice**
Economics and Philosophy 33 (1): 91–124

2016 **"Actual" Does Not Imply "Feasible"**
(with N. Southwood) *Philosophical Studies* 173 (11): 3037–3060

Benefiting from Wrongdoing and Sustaining Wrongful Harm
(with C. Barry) *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 13 (5): 530–552

Motivational Limitations on the Demands of Justice
European Journal of Political Theory 15 (3): 333–352

Assessing Ideal Theories: Lessons from the Theory of Second Best
Politics, Philosophy, and Economics 15 (2): 132–149

2015 **Political Ideals and the Feasibility Frontier**
Economics and Philosophy 31 (3): 447–477

Against Ideal Guidance
Journal of Politics 77 (2): 433–446

Natural Resources and Government Responsiveness
Politics, Philosophy, and Economics 14 (1): 84–105

2014 **"Going Evaluative" to Save Justice From Feasibility — A Pyrrhic Victory**
The Philosophical Quarterly 64 (255): 301–307

The Political Resource Curse: An Empirical Re-Evaluation
(with P. Poast and W.R. Clark) *Political Research Quarterly* 67 (4): 783–794

Journal articles

2014 **Natural Resources and Institutional Development**
Journal of Theoretical Politics 26 (2): 197–221

2013 **Demands of Justice, Feasible Alternatives, and the Need for Causal Analysis**
Ethical Theory & Moral Practice 16 (2): 325–338

2012 **Prescribing Institutions Without Ideal Theory**
The Journal of Political Philosophy 20 (1): 45–70

Book chapters

2020 **What Second-Best Scenarios Reveal About Ideals of Global Justice**
(with C. Barry) *Oxford Handbook of Global Justice*, ed. by T. Brooks (Oxford UP)

2017 **Will The Real Principles of Justice Please Stand Up?**
Political Utopias, ed. by K. Vallier and M. Weber (Oxford UP)

2015 **Achieving Global Justice: Why Failures Matter More Than Ideals**
Making Global Institutions Work, ed. by K. Brennan (Routledge)

Reviews

2023 **Ben Laurence, Agents of Change**
The Review of Politics 85 (2): 278–280

2017 **Leif Wenar, *Blood Oil***
Ethics 127 (3): 813–817

Presentations (incl. upcoming)

Invited

2025 International Social Ontology Society annual conference (keynote, Trinity College)
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Colloquium in Social and Political Philosophy
University of Oxford, Center for the Study of Social Justice seminar
Workshop on *From the Best to the Rest* (Univ. of Amsterdam)

2024 Duke University, Department of Political Science
Political Theory in/and/as Political Science (keynote, New York Univ.)
PPE at the Frontier Workshop (Univ. at Buffalo)
Purdue University, Department of Philosophy
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, PPE Seminar Series

2023 Australian National University, School of Politics and International Relations
Manuscript workshop for *From the Best to the Rest* (Australian National Univ.)

2021 Michigan Philosophy Alumni Conference (virtual)

2020 New York University, Department of Politics (virtual, with S. Ingham)
PPE Society, APA (Eastern) annual conference (Philadelphia, PA)

2018 American Philosophical Association (Pacific) annual conference (San Diego, CA)
Political Theory in/and/as Political Science (GRIPP and RGCS, McGill Univ.)
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Department of Political Science
Society for Applied Philosophy, APA (Eastern) annual conference (Savannah, GA)
UC Santa Barbara, Department of Political Science

2017 Stanford University, Political Theory Workshop

Invited

2016	Workshop on formal methods in political theory (Univ. of Arizona)
2015	Australian National University, School of Philosophy
	Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (Charles Sturt Univ.)
	Texas A&M University, Department of Political Science
2014	Workshop on feasibility and the ethics of war (Australian National Univ.)
	Workshop on political utopias (Bowling Green State Univ.)
	UC San Diego, Department of Philosophy
2013	Workshop on benefiting from injustice (Carnegie Council on Ethics in International Affairs, New York)
2012	Workshop on feasibility (Centre for Moral, Social, and Political Theory, ANU)
	Workshop on enabling harm (Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature, Univ. of Oslo)
	Monash Politics Research Workshop (Monash Univ.)
	University of Sydney, Dept. of Philosophy

Submitted

2025	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
2023	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
2022	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
2019	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
2018	American Political Science Association (Boston)
	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
2017	Association for Political Theory (Univ. of Michigan)
	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
2014	Association for Political Theory (Univ. of Wisconsin)
	Australasian Association of Philosophy (ANU)
2012	Australasian Association of Philosophy (Univ. of Wollongong)
	MANCEPT Workshop on ideal and nonideal theory (Univ. of Manchester)
2011	American Political Science Association (Seattle)
	Canadian Political Science Association (Waterloo)
	Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (ANU) ($\times$2)
2010	American Philosophical Association (Eastern) (Boston)
	British Society for Ethical Theory (Univ. of Nottingham)
	Canadian Political Science Association (Montreal)
	Dutch Conference on Practical Philosophy (Univ. of Groningen)
2008	Association for Legal and Social Philosophy (Univ. of Nottingham)
	Princeton Graduate Conference in Political Theory
	www.publicreason.net Podcast Symposium

Miscellaneous participation (chair, discussant, etc.) (*Invited)

2025	*PPE Summer Workshop (Chapman Univ.)
2024	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
	*PPE Summer Workshop (Chapman Univ.)
2023	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
	*PPE Summer Workshop (Chapman Univ.)

Miscellaneous participation (chair, discussant, etc.) (*Invited)

2022	PPE Society (New Orleans, LA)
	*PPE Summer Workshop (Chapman Univ.)
2021	*Liberty Fund conference on Hume's political economy (virtual)
	*PPE Summer Workshop (Chapman Univ., virtual)
2019	American Political Science Association (Washington, DC)
	*Manuscript workshop for Burke Hendrix, *Strategies of Justice* (Univ. of Oregon)
	*New Directions in Social Justice Theorizing (UCSD)
2018	*American Philosophical Association, Eastern Div. annual conference (Savannah, GA)
	*Society for Applied Philosophy, APA (Pacific) annual conference (San Diego)
2017	*Workshop on global justice (Univ. of Michigan)
2016	*American Philosophical Association, Pacific Div. annual conference (San Francisco)
	*Conference on exploitation (Univ. of San Diego)
	Western Political Science Association (San Diego, CA)
2015	*American Philosophical Association, Pacific Div. annual conference (Vancouver)
	*Conference on ideal theory (Center for Social Philosophy and Policy, Tucson, AZ)
2014	*Manuscript workshop for David Estlund, *Utopophobia* (ANU)
2013	American Political Science Association (Chicago)

Teaching

UCSD

Undergraduate

Classical political theory
Early modern political theory
Economic theories of political behavior
Ethics in society
International political theory
Introduction to game theory
Liberty and equality
Senior honors thesis seminar

Graduate

Analytical theory I
Introduction to game theory (superseded by Analytical theory I and II)
Democracy: Theory and measurement (with Sean Ingham)
Formal methods in liberal and democratic theory
Global equality, for & against
History of political thought: Plato to Rousseau
Ideals and reality in political theory
Methods in contemporary liberal theory
Social equality

Graduate student supervision

UCSD

Political science

Matthew Draper (MA [2020]; supervisor)
Kevin Flannagan (PhD; committee member)
Isabel Gotti (MA [2017]; supervisor)
C. Tyler Sharp (MA [2022]; supervisor)
Shelbi Swanson (PhD; chair)

Philosophy

Travis Chamberlain (PhD [2021], committee member)
Aaron Chipp-Miller (PhD, committee member)
Thomas Kirkpatrick (PhD [2023], committee member)
James (J.P.) Messina (PhD [2018], committee member)
Faron Ray (PhD, committee member)
Daniel Weltman (PhD [2018], committee member)

Service

Department

UCSD

Political Theory Field Coordinator (2015–2019; 2021–23, 2025–26)
Co-convener, Integrated Workshop (PhD students) (2016–2019; 2021–23, 2025–26)
Faculty Recruitment Committee
- Methods (2014–15)
- Omnibus (2016–17; 2017–18)
- Political Theory (2019–20, chair; 2022–23)

Graduate Admissions Committee (2016–2017; 2019; 2021; 2023–2025)
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force (2020–22, *ad hoc*)
Graduate curriculum reform committee (2021–22, *ad hoc*)
Convener, Political Theory Speaker Series (2015–2019; 2021–23, 2025–26)
Convener, Faculty Research Seminar (2015–2020)
- (Co-convener, 2014)

University

UCSD

Senate Undergraduate Council (2025–26)
Political Science Representative, Representative Assembly (2023–2025)
Academic Integrity Review Board (2018–2021)
Valtz Chair Selection Committee (2023, *ad hoc*, Dept. of Philosophy)

Profession

Editorial	*Politics, Philosophy, and Economics* Co-Editor (since 2023) Associate Editor (2019–2023)
Referee	*American Journal of Political Science* (×7); *American Philosophical Quarterly*; *American Political Science Review* (×4); *Analysis* (×3); *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*; *British Journal of Political Science*; *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (×2); *Contemporary Political Theory*; *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* (×2); *Economics and Philosophy* (×3); *Erkenntnis*; *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*; *Ethics* (×2); *European Journal of Political Theory* (×3); *Inquiry*; *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*; *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (×3); *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy* (×3); *Journal of Moral Philosophy*; *Journal of Philosophy*; *The Journal of Political Philosophy* (×14); *Journal of Politics* (×7); *Metaphilosophy*; *Moral Philosophy and Politics* (×3); Oxford University Press (×2); Palgrave Macmillan; *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (×2); *Philosophical Quarterly* (×3); *Philosophical Studies* (×11); *Philosophy Compass*; *Political Research Quarterly* (×3); *Political Studies* (×2); *Politics, Philosophy, & Economics* (×4); *Public Affairs Quarterly*; *Res Publica* (×2); *Social Philosophy and Policy* (×2); *Social Theory & Practice* (×4); *Synthese*; *The Review of Politics*; *Utilitas*
Confs.	Program Committee, *Association for Political Theory* (2020, 2022) Submission referee, *PPE Society* (2021–2025)