



THE RUST BELT PPE WORKSHOP

Friday, October 22ND
3–5 PM ET

Join on Zoom:
us02web.zoom.us/j/83923788638

FEATURED PAPER

Existential Risk and Equal Political Liberty

See second paper for paper abstract.



SPEAKER
Adam Gibbons
Rutgers

Adam Gibbons is a graduate student in philosophy at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, as well as a Global Priorities Fellow with the Forethought Foundation for global priorities research. His primary research interests lie at the intersection of political philosophy, political science, and political economy, though he is also interested in epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophical methodology.



SPEAKER
Joseph Porter
UNC Chapel Hill

Joseph Porter is a doctoral candidate in philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an Affiliated Graduate Student in UNC's PPE Program. His main areas of interest are PPE, political philosophy, and ethics (especially animal ethics). He is also interested in ancient philosophy, history of philosophy, and philosophy of religion.



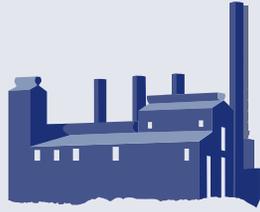
COMMENTATOR
Brian Kogelmann

Brian Kogelmann is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is also a Faculty Affiliate at the Ed Snider Center for Enterprise and Markets and an Affiliated Fellow at the F.A. Hayek Program for Advanced Studies in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. Brian received his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Arizona in 2017. In general, his research lies at the intersection of philosophy, political science, and economics. His first book, *Secret Government: The Pathologies of Publicity*, is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.

For more information or to present at future workshops, contact rustbeltppe@gmail.com
Small grant for commentator compensation available.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

In the age of COVID-19, philosophy has moved online at a greatly accelerated pace. Collaborative efforts in philosophy have moved online as well, including work in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE). For this reason, PPE researchers, especially at universities located in the US Rust Belt, have launched a monthly paper workshop to help early-career PPE researchers improve their work. Find us on social media with our targeted reminder for specific interest groups, such as the PPE Society, the Club Goods Facebook Group and the PPE Network on LinkedIn.



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ABSTRACT

Rawls famously argues that the parties in the original position should agree upon the two principles of justice, thus guaranteeing citizens equal political liberty. We argue on the contrary that the parties have reason to reject the requirement of equal political liberty. By Rawls' own lights, the parties must be greatly concerned to mitigate existential risk. But it is doubtful whether democracies optimally do so. Indeed, no one currently knows which political systems would. Consequently, the parties have reason to reject the requirement of equal political liberty in favor of an experimentalist political approach which does not rule out non-democratic systems which might mitigate existential risk optimally. We begin by summarizing some general facts about existential risk and three pathologies of democracy which hinder democracy's risk-mitigating capacities: voter ignorance, voter irrationality, and short-termism. We then argue that these facts, along with the possibility of less pathologized alternatives to democracy, give the parties reason to reject the requirement of equal political liberty. After addressing some further aspects of Rawls' theory, we consider two objections to our claim that it is doubtful whether democracies optimally mitigate existential risk. We conclude with a brief discussion of our argument's broader implications.

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