

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



THE JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

THE JUBILEE CENTRE

for Character and Virtues

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VIRTUES IN THE
DIGITAL WORLD
ORIEL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
10 - 12 September 2021

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Dear *Colleagues and Friends*,

After a challenging eighteen months for us all and a long delay to the commencement of this conference, I am particularly pleased to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to the ninth annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues and to Oriel College, Oxford.

I would first like to thank you all for your continued commitment and engagement with the Centre throughout such times, your willingness to travel here from all corners and ensure we are still able to host a diverse and engaging conference is most certainly appreciated. The recommencement of in person conferences is an encouraging sign for all I hope.

As always, we at the Jubilee Centre are very much looking forward to hosting the event and believe we have a delegate list of fantastic quality, from perennial attendees working in the field of virtue ethics to those joining us for the first time with perhaps a more specific focus upon the digital world. We hope uniting such scholars and practitioners across the conference will encourage fruitful discussions going forward.

With lockdowns meaning that much of our lives have been lived predominantly online during recent times, accelerating what was already a hugely significant trend, we feel such discussions are arguably more relevant than ever. We encourage you to continue to engage, participate and debate as delegates on the topics discussed in the seminar sessions, sharing your wisdom, best practice and unique insights to continue making this conference the success it has become.

I would also like to express my thanks and offer a warm welcome to our distinguished keynote speakers, I very much look forward to hearing each of your contributions.

I would like to thank you again, on behalf of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, for your attendance. We hope you enjoy the conference.

“ —
| *Without friends, no
one would want to
live, even if he had
all other goods.* |

Professor James Arthur OBE
Director

— ”
Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics



PROGRAMME

Friday 10 September 2021

11.30am - 12.00noon
Arrival and Registration
Porter's Lodge

12.00noon - 1.00pm
Lunch
Hall

1.00 - 1.15pm
Welcome
Harris Lecture Theatre

1.15 - 2.30pm
Key Note 1: Shannon Vallor
Harris Lecture Theatre

2.30 - 3.00pm
Tea
Harris Seminar Room

3.00 - 4.30pm
Seminar Session 1

4.30 - 6.30pm
Check into Bedrooms

6.30 - 7.30pm
Drinks
Champneys Room

7.30pm
Dinner
Hall

Saturday 11 September 2021

08.00 - 09.00am
Breakfast
Hall

09.15 - 10.30am
Key Note 2: Jeroen Van Den Hoven
Harris Lecture Theatre

10.30 - 11.00am
Coffee
Harris Seminar Room

11.00am - 12.30pm
Seminar Session 2

12.30 - 1.30pm
Lunch
Hall

1.30 - 2.45pm
Key Note 3: Mark Jonas
Harris Lecture Theatre

2.45 - 3.15pm
Tea
Harris Seminar Room

3.15 - 4.45pm
Seminar Session 3

6.30 - 7.30pm
Drinks
Champneys Room

7.30pm
Conference Dinner
Hall

Sunday 12 September 2021

08.00 - 09.00am
Breakfast
Hall

09.00 - 09.30am
Check out of Bedrooms

09.30 - 10.45am
Key Note 4: Tom Harrison and Matthew Dennis
Harris Lecture Theatre

10.45 - 11.00am
Coffee
Harris Seminar Room

11.00am - 12.30pm
Seminar Session 4

12.30 - 12.45pm
Closing Remarks
Harris Lecture Theatre

12.45 - 1.45pm
Lunch
Hall

1.45pm
Depart



KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

Friday 10 September –
Sunday 12 September 2021

Professor Shannon Vallor

University of Edinburgh, UK

Chair: Professor James Arthur

TECHNOMORAL VIRTUES AND THE BOOTSTRAPPING PROBLEM

It is widely accepted that the digital age presents increasingly urgent ethical challenges that call for responses guided by collective moral and political wisdom. However, calls for the cultivation of what I have called the technomoral virtues—skilled dispositions to judge and act well in precisely this arena—face a bootstrapping problem. The very models of human excellence most familiar and accessible to us today, are precisely those that led us into the crises we now face. In this talk I confront the problem of cultivating virtues of a new moral shape, and the radical cultural transformations this may entail.

Professor Jeroen van den Hoven

Delft University of Technology, the
Netherlands

Chair: Professor Andrew Peterson

DESIGNING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR MORAL AGENCY

Online platforms and social media have been designed for profit, for addiction, and personal data disclosure (Zuboff, *Surveillance Capitalism*, 2019). These digital environments are typically not designed to support the development of their users as moral agents. Instead they can easily push ordinary, pro-social people toward evil they would otherwise not have considered (Cocking & Van den Hoven, *Evil Online*, 2018). Our capacities to appreciate and respond to moral value are vulnerable in many ways, and living online has compounded these problems. In order to address the problems we will have to learn to design the conditions for moral agency.

(Presentation to be given by video)

Professor Mark Jonas

Wheaton College, USA

Chair: Professor Kristján Kristjánsson

PLATONIC INSIGHTS ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE VIRTUES IN A DIGITAL AGE

In this paper, I turn to an unlikely source for insights into the cultivation of virtues in the digital age: Plato. Although they were written 2500 years before the digital age, Plato's dialogues offer contemporary philosophers and educators insights into the ethical perils of the digital age and how we might go about cultivating virtues to respond to those perils. Using the Republic and other dialogues, I argue that Plato anticipated the ways digital media can colonize our consciousnesses and make virtue formation more difficult than it might otherwise be. This is not to say that virtue formation is impossible in the digital age, but we must be aware of the special challenges that face us if we are to cultivate the virtues in ourselves and others.

Dr. Tom Harrison and

Dr. Matthew Dennis

University of Birmingham, UK and
Delft University of Technology, the
Netherlands

Chair: Professor Sarah Banks

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP: LIVING WELL TOGETHER IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Online technologies complicate traditional forms of civic evaluation by shaping our thoughts, emotions, and our collective conduct in unique ways. The aim of this presentation is to offer a character-based response to the key civic challenges that online technologies present. To do this, we develop a notion of 'digital citizenship', exploring how this can be cultivated in a pedagogic context. We start by outlining the limitations to current approaches to digital citizenship, showing how this does not adequately prepare young people for their digital lives. After this, we explore the merits (and potential problems) of a character-based approach to digital citizenship.

SEMINAR SESSION LISTS

SEMINAR SESSION 1

3.00 – 4.30pm Friday 10 September 2021

Harris Lecture Theatre

Chair: Professor Kristján Kristjánsson

**Professor Kevin Gary and
Dr. Douglas Yacek**
Boredom and Aspiration in Moral
Education

**Dr. Matthew Kuan Johnson and
Dr. Lani Watson**
The Virtues And Vices Of Life: 'Close
To The Machine'

Robert Beddard Room

Chair: Aidan Thompson

Dr. Scott Parsons
Does the Ethical Training for Cadets in
Their Required Ethics and Philosophy
Course at the United States Military
Academy at West Point Have a
Significant Effect on How They
Reason About Moral Issues?

**Dr. David Ian Walker and
Dr. Brenda Mendiola**
Putting Virtue Ethics to Work for
Educational Leaders in Alabama: A
First Year Review

SEMINAR SESSION 2

11.00am – 12.30pm Saturday 11 September 2021

Harris Lecture Theatre

Chair: Aidan Thompson

Professor Sarah Banks
Professional Virtues in the Digital
World: Slow Ethics for Social Work

Professor Jennifer Baker
Five Stoic Preparations for a Digital
World

Robert Beddard Room

Chair: Dr. Tom Harrison

Michael Fullard
Leading Character Education in
Schools: Designing an Online CPD
Programme

**Dr. Robert Jackson and
Dr. Matthew Post**
The Afterlife and Recovery of *Logos*,
ēthos, and *Pathos* in K-12 Education

SEMINAR SESSION 3

3.15 – 4.45pm Saturday 11 September 2021

Harris Lecture Theatre

Chair: Professor Andrew Peterson

**Professor Juan Luis Fuentes and
Professor Juan García-Gutiérrez**
Aristotle Reloaded: Do We Need New
Virtues in a Hyper-Connected World?

**Dr. Marcy Van Fossen,
Fr. Dr. James P. Burns, Professor
Thomas Lickona, Brother Larry Schatz**
Teaching Virtue Virtually: Can the
Virtue of Tolerance of Diversity of
Conscience be Taught Online?

Robert Beddard Room

Chair: Michael Fullard

Dr. Paul Trafford
Cultivating *Sīla* Online: The Use of
Cognitive Interventions in Systems
Design

Mara Neijzen
Extending Intellectual Humility

SEMINAR SESSION 4

11.00am – 12.30pm Sunday 12 September 2021

Harris Lecture Theatre

Chair: Professor Kristján Kristjánsson

Dr. Gianfranco Polizzi
Cyber-Wisdom Education: Proposing
a New Framework for Understanding
and Promoting Wisdom in the Digital
Age

**Dr. Rachel Siow Robertson and Dr.
Matthew Kuan Johnson**
A Virtue Theoretical Approach to
Honesty and Online Agency

SEMINAR PAPER ABSTRACTS

Seminar Session 1

Friday 10 September 2021 3.00 – 4.30pm

HARRIS LECTURE THEATRE

Professor Kevin Gary and Dr. Douglas Yacek

BOREDOM AND ASPIRATION IN MORAL EDUCATION

So much of modern culture, as Walker Percy notes, is a 'boredom avoidance scheme', in which we prop up our attention and interest by compulsively checking our social media, emails, news updates, online sales campaigns, and so forth. In this paper, we attempt to make sense of the complex relationship between boredom and moral growth. We argue that while boredom can sometimes helpfully signal a loss of purpose or meaning, it tends to distort the moral possibilities within our environment. In response, we suggest that a characteristically aspirational approach to education can reframe and potentially even resolve the hazards of boredom.

Dr. Matthew Kuan Johnson and Dr. Lani Watson

THE VIRTUES AND VICIES OF LIFE 'CLOSE TO THE MACHINE'

Much has been written, speculated and predicted about artificial intelligence (AI) and its capacity to replicate and simulate human intelligence. Much less has been said about causation in the other direction. While the advent of humanoid robots and machine learning algorithms modeled on human neurological systems exemplify AI and digital technologies formed in the image of their creators, it is also possible that working on these technologies can form creators in the image of their technological creations. In this paper, we examine the characterological effects of human-machine proximity from a virtue-theoretical perspective. We investigate both the virtues and vices that may be cultivated in those creating and working closely with technology and issue a call for more empirical work on the characterological effects of human-machine proximity, providing greater insight into the urgency and scope of this concern.

ROBERT BEDDARD ROOM

Dr. Scott Parsons

DOES THE ETHICAL TRAINING FOR CADETS IN THEIR REQUIRED ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHY COURSE AT THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON HOW THEY REASON ABOUT MORAL ISSUES?

This study is the first to measure moral reasoning at the intermediate-concept level before and after an intervention. The aim of this study is to determine if the current ethical training for cadets at West Point has a significant effect on how they reason about and adjudicate moral issues. To achieve this aim, the research design was an intervention to see if cadets would improve their moral reasoning after receiving instruction in normative ethical theories, specifically virtue ethics and just war theory in their required ethics and philosophy course.

Dr. David Ian Walker and Dr. Brenda Mendiola

PUTTING VIRTUE ETHICS TO WORK FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN ALABAMA: A FIRST YEAR REVIEW

According to virtue-ethics philosophy, character development in educational contexts emphasises student flourishing as the rightful purpose of education. Leaders at super-intendent level are perfectly situated to have a district-wide perspective for putting this into practice. Since January 2020, faculty at the University of Alabama (UA) in the Leadership for Character Project have been working toward such goals by helping aspiring and actual superintendents to understand what leadership for character through community entails. The paper reflects on our practitioner focused efforts to 1.) support ethical leaders at superintendent level and 2.) cultivate communities that prioritize character in Alabama Schools.

Seminar Session 2

Saturday 11 September 11.00am – 12.30pm

HARRIS LECTURE THEATRE

Professor Sarah Banks

PROFESSIONAL VIRTUES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD: SLOW ETHICS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Covid-19 has accelerated trends towards digital communication in human services. This paper discusses the ethical challenges for social workers, for whom human relationships lie at the heart of their work. It draws on data from an international survey in May 2020 and an ongoing survey of UK social workers during 2020-21 to examine lessons from digital working during Covid-19 from a virtue ethical perspective. The paper advocates for 'slow ethics' in times of fast-moving crisis, and the virtues of courage, compassion and professional wisdom exemplified through the 'ethics work' of practitioners struggling to practise ethically in new and difficult circumstances.

Professor Jennifer Baker

FIVE STOIC PREPARATIONS FOR A DIGITAL WORLD

Could features of stoic virtue ethics prepare agents for the challenges of 'digital life'? The incentives anonymity and social media approval provide for negative self-comparison are challenged by a stoic account, which also provides guidance that is missing from other moral theories. Another feature suggests how we should respond to information. Stoicism models a check for actionable information that other moral theories could include. A fourth is how stoicism recommends we assess our use of time. And a fifth stoic preparation is a matter of how we are to 'live as on a mountain', regarding our lives as shared material.

ROBERT BEDDARD ROOM

Michael Fullard

LEADING CHARACTER EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: DESIGNING AN ONLINE CPD PROGRAMME

This paper presents the design approach, programme content and evaluation of the Jubilee Centre's online character education Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme, 'Leading Character Education in Schools'. The programme forms the concluding part of the Jubilee Centre's Teacher Education research project, exploring how teachers are prepared and supported to meet the moral and ethical demands of their role. Currently over 2,000 educational leaders have registered from over 60 countries. This paper will make recommendations for how a framework for future research and design methodology for producing large online teacher training programmes can be developed.

Dr. Robert Jackson and Dr. Matthew Post

THE AFTERLIFE AND RECOVERY OF LOGOS, *ĒTHOS*, AND *PATHOS* IN K-12 EDUCATION

The paper explores the problem of demagoguery in the context of digital media. Contemporary public debate is often simplified and thus susceptible to demagoguery. Furthermore, the Internet provides technological means to amplify the impact of demagoguery, it also supports the culture of infotainment and shallow thinking. Demagoguery cannot be eliminated institutionally in a democratic society. Therefore the best antidote to it is education of the moral, intellectual and civic virtues, combined with an adequate media education. We analyse the key relevant virtues (prudence, open-mindedness, critical thinking, humility, civility, moderation and justice), and media skills (verifying, cross-checking information).

Seminar Session 3

Saturday 11 September 3.15 – 4.45pm

HARRIS LECTURE THEATRE

Professor Juan Luis Fuentes and Professor Juan García-Gutiérrez

ARISTOTLE RELOADED: DO WE NEED NEW VIRTUES IN A HYPER-CONNECTED WORLD?

The emergence of new concepts such as digital critical thinking, cyber-wisdom, internet privacy, veracity in the transmission of information online, the easy access to the information that allows a new way of researching and getting new knowledge or the very digital citizenship make us think about new horizons for character education. The objective of this paper is to analyse critically the main arguments that demand new virtues for a new world, for an epochal change guided by algorithms and emergent technologies, with significant consequences for development and enjoyment of human rights and for the definition of an educated person.

Dr. Marcy Van Fossen, Fr. James P. Burns,
Professor Thomas Lickona, Brother Larry Schatz

TEACHING VIRTUE VIRTUALLY: CAN THE VIRTUE OF TOLERANCE OF DIVERSITY OF CONSCIENCE BE TAUGHT ONLINE?

This study focused on the virtue of tolerance as it relates to an often-neglected area of diversity—diversity of conscience—defined as 'legitimate differences of moral and religious conscience' (Lickona, 2006). This merits exploration because tolerance is essential for fostering civility in our increasingly diverse societies and for promoting the free exchange of perspectives that is central to the mission of higher education. An online workshop taught this concept and presented the cardinal virtues as accountability parameters for civil dialogue. The results from pre- and post-workshop questionnaires support this modality as a useful first step in teaching tolerance of diversity of conscience.

ROBERT BEDDARD ROOM

Dr. Paul Trafford

CULTIVATING *SĪLA* ONLINE: THE USE OF COGNITIVE INTERVENTIONS IN SYSTEMS DESIGN

This paper addresses, from a Buddhist perspective, the burgeoning challenges of living and flourishing with digital technology. At its heart are the principles of human agency and a framework for the cultivation of *sīla* (moral virtue). These allow us respectively to develop criteria for evaluating new technology, such as artificial intelligence, and to design systems that enhance well-being and human relationships. Accordingly, we apply them to the design of novel online social networks, where we treat the problem of maintaining heedfulness by deploying thinking routines to strengthen cognitive (and hence moral) functioning.

Mara Neijzen

EXTENDING INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY

Responsibilist epistemic virtues – acquired traits such as intellectual humility and diligence – are becoming increasingly relevant for online knowledge acquisition and social interaction, due to the prevalence of misinformation and heated debates on the web. This paper proposes a method to enhance responsibilist virtue by applying the extended cognition framework to epistemic virtues. This results in an example of extended intellectual humility, described as the coupled dynamical system of a hypothetical agent and a hypothetical app, where the design of the latter is based on empirically supported methods to increase awareness of one's cognitive limitations.

Seminar Session 4

Sunday 12 September 11.00am – 12.30pm

HARRIS LECTURE THEATRE

Dr. Gianfranco Polizzi

CYBER-WISDOM EDUCATION: PROPOSING A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING WISDOM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Based on the theoretical work that is currently being undertaken by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, this paper proposes a framework for understanding and promoting, via formal education, the concept of cyber-wisdom as a multi-component construct, defined as the ability to do the right thing at the right time, when using the internet. Building on three prominent models of wisdom, the framework suggests that cyber-wisdom, which is essential for navigating online risks and opportunities, relies on four components: cyber-wisdom literacy; reasoning; self-reflection; and motivation. Each component is discussed both conceptually and, in terms of teaching delivery methods, practically.

Dr. Rachel Siow Robertson and
Dr. Matthew Kuan Johnson

A VIRTUE THEORETICAL APPROACH TO HONESTY AND ONLINE AGENCY

This paper provides a virtue theoretical framework for understanding the development and use of the virtue of honesty (truth discovery and truth-bearing) in the online context. We first explore how the online context enables new types of agents and agency, and how the virtue of honesty works in each type. We then consider situations where one may be motivated to be honest, but online structures and inequalities make honesty difficult or impossible. We suggest that affected individuals can address this challenge with the kinds of non-Aristotelian virtues called for in situations of structural oppression (the 'burdened virtues', following Tessman, 2005).

“ —
| *All persons ought to
endeavour to follow
what is right, and not
what is established.* |

— ”
Aristotle



DELEGATE LIST

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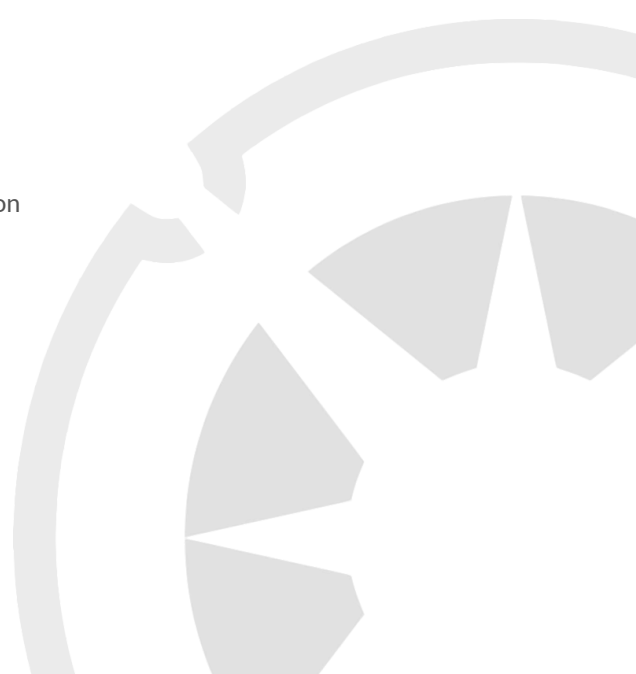
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JOHN TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION

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THE JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

2022

10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

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