

Matthew Benjamin Cole

Harvard College Writing Program
One Bow Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

Email: mbenjamincole@fas.harvard.edu
Phone: (919) 485-9778

Academic Appointment

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Preceptor of Expository Writing, Harvard College Writing Program (2016 – present)

Education

Duke University, Durham, NC

PhD in Political Science. 2017

Carleton College, Northfield, MN

BA in Political Science (*magna cum laude* and with distinction), 2009

Fields of Interest

Modern and Contemporary Political Theory
History of Political Thought
Utopianism and Anti-Utopianism
Philosophy and Social Criticism
Politics and Literature

Book Project: *Dystopia and Political Imagination in the Twentieth Century*

I am currently revising my dissertation *Dystopia and Political Imagination in the Twentieth Century* for publication as a book. My dissertation offers an interpretation of twentieth century political thought which emphasizes the influence of dystopian images, themes, and anxieties. Drawing examples from philosophy, literature, and social science, I explain the emergence of dystopian social criticism and discuss its role in key twentieth century debates concerning freedom, power, and responsibility.

The book manuscript currently discusses: the emergence and decline of modern utopianism (Chapter 1); the seminal dystopian novels of Huxley and Orwell (Chapter 2); the role of paradigmatic dystopian images related to *totalitarianism*, *mass society*, and *technocracy* in post-war political discourse (Chapter 3); and the innovative responses to these discourses made by Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, and Michel Foucault in their respective philosophies of freedom (Chapter 4). In a new chapter, I will bring the discussion into the 21st century by examining the influence of classic and contemporary dystopian works on ongoing ethical and political debates (Chapter 5).

Working Papers

“The Negative Utopianism of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell”

“The Administration of Things: Jürgen Habermas and the Critique of Technocracy”

[“The Language of Genocide and Human Rights: Naming, Judging, Acting”](#)

Conference and Workshop Participation

“The Negative Utopianism of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell,” Association for Political Theory Annual Conference, Ann Arbor, MI, October 2017.

Discussant for “Naming a Problem from Hell: Languages of Violence, 1880-1950,” The Language of Genocide: Discourse and Policy Conference, Duke University, Durham, NC, April 2015.

Discussant for Jan-Werner Müller’s “What Is Populism?” Duke Political Theory Workshop, Duke University, Durham, NC, February 2015.

Chair for “Individual and Collective Agency,” Duke Graduate Conference in Political Theory, Duke University, Durham, NC, February 2015.

“Beyond the Heuristics of Fear: Dystopia and Damaged Life,” Society for Utopian Studies Annual Conference, Montreal, Quebec, CA, October 2014.

“*Politeia: Syndicates: A Near-Future Simulation for Educators*,” Society for Utopian Studies Annual Conference, Montreal, Quebec, CA, October 2014.

“Technocratic Intentions and Cybernetic Dreams: Dystopian Thinking in Habermas”

- Poster presentation, American Political Science Association Annual Conference, Washington, DC, August 2014.
- Poster presentation, Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 2014.

Discussant for Stephen White’s “No-Saying in Habermas,” Duke Political Theory Workshop, Duke University, Durham, NC, October 2011.

Teaching

Harvard College Writing Program, Harvard University (2016 – Present)

As Instructor

EXPOS 20: Who’s Got the Power? (Fall 2016, Spring 2017)

Department of Political Science, Duke University (2011 – 2016)

As Instructor

POLSCI 120/ETHICS 101: Challenges of Living an Ethical Life (Spring 2016)

POLSCI 275: Left, Right, and Center (Fall 2014)

As Teaching Assistant

POLSCI 120/ETHICS 101: Challenges of Living an Ethical Life (Spring 2015)

PHIL 246/POLSCI 331/ECON 361: The Prisoner’s Dilemma and Distributive Justice (Fall 2013)

POSC 175: Introduction to Political Philosophy (Spring 2011)

Duke Talent Identification Program, Durham, NC (2011 – 2016)

As Instructor

The Prime Directive & Beyond: Ethics in Science Fiction (2015 – 2016)

Utopia, Dystopia, Myopia: Philosophical Perspectives on the Technological Age (2012 – 2014)

As Teaching Assistant

Political Cultures and Counter-Cultures; Revolution and Terror; Apocalypse Soon (2011 – 2012)

Summer Writing Program, Carleton College (2009)

Rhetoric Assistant

Academic Support Center, Carleton College (2006 – 2009)

Writing Consultant *Writing Assistant*

ENGL 110: English Comp. (2006); POSC 160: Political Philosophy (2007-2009)

Awards and Honors

Dissertation Support Award, Duke Political Science Department, 2014

Earhart Foundation Fellowship, 2010-2012

Independent Research Fellowship, Carleton College, 2008

Exemplary Writing Portfolio, Carleton College, 2007

Professional Activities

Researcher & Undergraduate Advisor, Bass Connections Project., “The Language of Genocide and Human Rights,” Duke University, Durham, NC, 2014 – 2015

Assistant Organizer, “Symposium on Action,” Duke University, Durham, NC, September 2014