

Syracuse University

College of Arts & Sciences

Laurence Thomas



Professor
Philosophy

[Research Page](#)

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Research and Teaching Interests

Laurence Thomas is the author of over 80 articles and four books: *Living Morally: A Psychology of Moral Character* (Temple University Press, 1989), *Vessels of Evil* (Temple University Press, 1993), *Sexual Rights and Human Orientation* (Roman & Littlefield, 1999), and *The Family and the Political Self* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). His articles on moral theory, on social philosophy and on American Blacks and Jews have been widely anthologized and have appeared in volumes with the distinguished legal theorist Ronald Dworkin and the political theorist Michael Walzer. He has held appointments at Notre Dame, University of Maryland, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Oberlin College, and in 1994 was a visiting scholar in the Religion Department at the University of Michigan. He was Andrew Mellon Faculty Fellow at Harvard University in 1978-79, received an NEH award to conduct a seminar on "Competing Rights Claims" in the summer of 1981, and was a Fellow of the National Humanities Center in 1982-83. He has given the Lawrence Kohlberg Lecture at the Association of Moral Education (1993) and the fifth Meyer Warren Tenenbaum and Labelle Tenenbaum Lecture at the University of South Carolina.

Thomas's teaching has been widely noted and praised, including feature in the Education Section of The New York Times (26 April, 1992). He was named Syracuse University's Scholar-Teacher of the Year in 1993. In July 1997, he presented the Kovler Lectures at the Medical School of the University of Cape Town, South Africa. These lectures will become part of his forthcoming book on moral objectivity and evil. He has been the Lincoln Lecturer (Fall 2002) at Arizona State University and in October of 2000, he lectured before Queen Beatrix of Holland.

Some of his essays in progress are "Kant on Equality" and "Autonomy, Behavior, and Moral Goodness". Professor Thomas is listed in *Who's Who Among American Teachers* and *Who's Who in Social Science*. In November 2004, he lectured at the Royal Institute of Philosophy in the United Kingdom.

Two of Thomas's recent publications include "[Upside-Down Equality: A Response to Kantian Thought](#)", and "[Forgiving the Unforgivable](#)". And one of his forthcoming essays is "[Autonomy, Behavior, and Moral Goodness](#)", in which he challenges the view that autonomy is always good. Another one of Thomas's [forthcoming essays](#) is on living a meaningful life. Occasionally Thomas writes an [Op-Ed piece](#) for the local newspaper. His latest contribution is on terrorism and self-indulgence.

You can find many of Professor Thomas's writings at his website: laurencethomas.com.

Selected Publications

Social Philosophy (Blackwell Publishers, 2007), editor.

The Family and the Political Self (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Human Rights and Sexual Orientation, with Michael Levin (Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

Vessels of Evil: American Slavery and the Holocaust (Temple University Press, 1993).

Living Morally: A Psychology of Moral Character (Temple University Press, 1989). Parts of Chapter 4, "An Account of Friendship", in *Philosophical Dimensions of Friendship*, ed. Neera Badhwar (Cornell University Press, 1992).

Guest Editor: *Festschrift for Kurt Baier*, *Synthese* 72 (1987), nos. 1 & 2.

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