

# Julius Schönherr

## Personal Data

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## Area of Specialization

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Philosophy of Mind/Cognitive Science, Normative Ethics

## Area of Competence

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Bioethics, Ethics of Climate Change

## Education

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Spring 2019  
(expected) Ph.D. Philosophy, **University of Maryland**, College Park  
Thesis: Mindreading for cooperation: a moderately minimalist  
approach  
Advisor: Peter Carruthers, Distinguished University Professor  
Committee: Dan Moller, Eric Pacuit

August 2012 M.A. Philosophy, **Humboldt University**, Berlin

August 2010 B.A. Philosophy, **Humboldt University**, Berlin

## Peer Reviewed Publications

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Schönherr, J. J Value Inquiry (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10790-018-9673-6> won the APA's Marc Sanders graduate student prize

Schönherr, Julius (2018) Lucky joint action, *Philosophical Psychology*, 32:1, 123-142.

Schönherr, Julius (2018). Still Lives for Headaches: A reply to Dorsey and Voorhoeve. *Utilitas*, 30 (2):209-218.

Schönherr, J., & Westra, E. (2017). Beyond 'Interaction': How to Understand Social Effects on Social Cognition. *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*. (online first)

Schönherr, J. (2017). What's so Special About Interaction in Social Cognition?. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 8(2), 181-198.

## Conference Proceedings

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Schönherr, J. (2013). What makes moral values queer? In: Spitzley, T., Hoeltje, M., & Spohn, W. (eds.). *GAP.8* (Proceedings of the tri-annual meeting of the German Society for Analytic Philosophy).

Schönherr, J. (2012). Moral Principles despite Particularism. In: Petersen, Borchers, O., Dagmar, Spitzley, D., Stöckler, T. *GAP.7*. (Proceedings of the tri-annual meeting of the German Society for Analytic Philosophy).

## Papers in Preparation

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Schönherr, J. (Under review). Coordinating through Precedent Without Common Inductive Standards.

Schönherr, J. (R&R at *Philosophical Review*). The Endorsement View of Forgiveness.

Schönherr, J. (In preparation). Joint Action without Joint Intention.

Schönherr, J. (In preparation). The paradox of toleration.

## Professional presentations

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Jan. 2019 “When Forgiveness Comes Easy” at the eastern division meeting of the APA, New York, USA

Sept. 2017 “Lucky Joint Action”, presented at the conference *Philosophy Days* in Uppsala, Sweden

June 2017 “Joint Actions without Joint Goals”, presented at the Joint Action Workshop at the Berlin School of Mind and Brain.

August 2015 “The problem of imperceptible contributions to harm”, Linköping, Sweden; presented at the conference *Globalisation and Global Justice*.

July 2015 “What’s so special about interaction in social cognition?” Tartu, Estonia; presented at the annual conference of the European Society for Philosophy and Psychology

June 2015 “What’s so special about interaction in social cognition?” (poster presentation), Berlin School of Mind and Brain, Berlin; presented at the conference *The nature and origins of cognition*.

June 2014 “The Explanatory Keep of Intentional State Ascriptions: Two Accounts”, Krakow, Poland; presented at the Jagiellonian-Rutgers Conference in Cognitive Science 2014 (CogSciJR14)

Sept. 2012 “What makes moral values queer?” Constance, Germany; presented at the triennial conference of the Germany Society for Analytical Philosophy

Sept. 2009 “Moral principles despite particularism”, Bremen, Germany; presented at the triennial conference of the Germany Society for Analytical Philosophy

## Teaching experience

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### As principal instructor

Spring 2018 “Topic in Bioethics: Autonomy”, University of Maryland

Fall 2017 “Introduction to Ethics”, University of Maryland

Summer 2017 “Ethics of Climate Change” (taught online), University of Maryland

Fall 2016 “Philosophy of the Environment”, University of Maryland

Fall 2015 “Philosophy of the Environment”, University of Maryland

## As teaching assistant

- Spring 2016 “Political and Social Philosophy”, University of Maryland
- Spring 2015 “Darwin’s dangerous idea”, University of Maryland
- Fall 2014 “Contemporary moral issues”, University of Maryland
- Spring 2014 “Know Thyself: Wisdom Through Cognitive Science”, University of Maryland
- Fall 2010 “Introduction to philosophy”, Humboldt University
- Fall 2009 “Introduction to philosophy”, Humboldt University

## Service work

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- Sep. 2017 –  
present Undergraduate advisor, University of Maryland
- Sep. 2016 –  
May 2017 Graduate Representative for the department of philosophy, University of Maryland
- Sept 2015 –  
May 2016 Representative at the Dean’s Graduate Student Advisory Board, University of Maryland

## Awards and Prizes

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- 2018 *Marc Sanders APA Graduate Student prize*. One of three annual APA (eastern division) graduate student prizes for the best papers in mind, metaphysics, epistemology or ethics. (\$1000)
- 2018 *Ann G. Wylie Semester Dissertation Fellowship* (\$16000) (University-wide fellowship, awarded to around 40 students from around 4000 eligible students.)
- 2014 *Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant* (\$700)

## Languages

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- German: Native
- English: Fluent
- Spanish: Proficient

## Graduate course work (courses with credits)

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- Metaphysics, Mind, and Language (E. Eaker)
- Libertarianism (D. Moller)
- Intentionality (G. Rey)
- Defeasible reasoning (J. Horty)
- Value theory (P. Greenspan)
- Social cognition (P. Carruthers)
- Political theory (C. Morris)

Early social cognition (J. Beier)  
Distributive Justice (D. Moller)  
Ethics and game theory (S. Kuhn)  
Bioethics (S. Kerstein)

## Graduate course work (courses audited)

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Animal consciousness (P. Carruthers)  
Climate models (M. Frisch)  
Bioethics (S. Kerstein)

# Dissertation Summary

Human cooperation is unique among animals in its extent and sophistication, in part because humans can reason about others' mental states; e.g. their intentions, desires, emotions and thoughts. In short, humans can engage in what is often called mindreading. With this in mind, much research about human cooperation is aptly understood as an attempt to resolve the following tension: On the one hand, mindreading is helpful to buttress cooperation; some would say it is indispensable. On the other hand, mindreading is cognitively costly, much too costly, some say, to serve as a broad foundation for human cooperation in the real world. Furthermore, the demand for cognitively sparse theories of cooperation has increased further by incipient attempts to model cooperation among artificial agents for which computational power is inherently limited. In trying to resolve this tension between cognitively sparse and rich theories of cooperation, much current research asks "How much mindreading is *minimally* required to explain cooperation among both human and artificial agents?". This is in stark contrast with earlier research that was concerned primarily with generating models that could *possibly* explain cooperation.

The broad aim of my two-part dissertation is to advance the so-called minimal theory of human cooperation. More particularly, I argue that although cooperation is unthinkable without the attribution of mental states to one's potential partners, the extent to which these attributions have been thought necessary has been overstated. In showing this, I rely (a.) on recent findings from cognitive science and psychology, and (b.) on the classical philosophical method of conceptual analysis. Each of these parts of my dissertation will focus on one of these distinct sources.

The first, empirical, part consists of two papers. In "**What's so Special About Interaction in Social Cognition?**", I have defended the idea that core cases of cooperative interaction cannot plausibly be explained without appeal to mindreading. This is because mindreading in humans is a fast, automatic, and developmentally early capacity. Moreover, explaining social interaction without appeal to mindreading results in arcane and ad hoc theoretical models. The relevant capacities, as I further argue in my paper "**Beyond Interaction**", are not restricted to cooperative interactions but can be found in a wide array of human activities. Hence, cognitive science should not treat social interaction as a natural kind.

Next, in the conceptual part of my dissertation, I criticize the idea that true cooperation requires thorough knowledge of one's partners' intentions. Traditionally, philosophers have thought that, in truly cooperative acts, the intentions of each partner must be fully transparent to all parties involved. Recently, this picture has been subjected to criticism. My paper "**Lucky Joint Action**" extends this research. In this paper, I claim that thorough knowledge of one's co-participants' intentions is not just not necessary but can be rather harmful to successful cooperation.

Lastly, in the final paper of my dissertation – "**Coordinating Through Precedent Without Common Inductive Standards**" – I show that it is often sufficient for successful cooperation that an agent *not doubt* that her co-participants' intentions support the cooperative activity; positive knowledge of their intentions is, again, not required. While the philosophical literature has, at times, sporadically acknowledged that the absence of doubt on the one hand and positive belief attributions on the other are different, the structural importance of this

distinction has previously gone unnoticed.