

Streiffer's Job Market Sampler

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- My C. V., as it was when I went on the market.

Cover letter for a listing which mentioned that the applicant be willing and able to teach to non-philosophy majors. Notice the use of authentic small-caps (as opposed to either all-caps or MS Word's built in small-caps feature, and expert numerals as opposed to regular numerals.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Philosophy Search Committee
c/o Dean Stuart J. Sigman
School of Communication, Management and Public Policy
Emerson College
100 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Dear Dean Sigman,

I am writing to apply for position number 8, advertised in Jobs for Philosophers, volume 140.

Because M. I. T. has a relatively small number of undergraduate majors in philosophy, and because my teaching at Harvard has been for masters students in the public policy program of the J. F. K. School of Government, I have enjoyed ample exposure to teaching non-philosophy majors.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which straightforwardly fell within my areas.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

MR Search
Department of Philosophy
208 Emerson Hall
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for position number 13, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which wanted an AOC in history of philosophy, which I didn't have.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Search Committee A
Department of Philosophy and Religion
Hofstra University
Heger Hall
Hempstead, New York 11549

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for position number 16, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140.

Although I do not list history of philosophy as an area of competence, I would be able to teach a standard undergraduate course in early modern philosophy (e.g., Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant) or in early modern political philosophy (e.g., Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau), and would very much welcome the opportunity to do so.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which wanted an AOS in political philosophy. I had had a fair bit of teaching and course work in political philosophy, but little of my own research, so I hadn't listed it as an AOS.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Professor John Robison
Head of Philosophy
Philosophy Department
352 Bartlett Hall
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts 01003

Dear Professor Robison,

I am writing to apply for position number 20, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140.

Although I am not currently specializing in political philosophy, my curriculum vitae makes it clear that I have had considerable immersion in the area. I would very much welcome the opportunity for further research and teaching in political philosophy.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, my official graduate transcript, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which straightforwardly fell within my areas, but for which one course I had TA-d for seemed especially relevant. So I mentioned it in the cover letter.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

December 6, 1998

Office of Human Resources
University of Massachusetts, Boston
Search 23275
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125-3393

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for position number 22, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140. I will be available for interviews at the Eastern Division APA meeting.

With respect to the focus of the position, I would like to mention that "Responsibilities for Public Action," the class for which I am currently a teaching fellow and for which I was a teaching fellow in the Fall of 1997, is a class designed for students getting their masters degree in Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy's School of Government. It focuses almost exclusively on legal ethics and public policy ethics. I would very much welcome further opportunity to do teaching and research in these areas.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, two sets of representative course materials, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which straightforwardly fell within my areas. Listing said to indicate availability for interviews at the APA.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Dr. Thomas F. Dailey, O. S. F. S.
Department of Philosophy and Theology
Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales
2755 Station Avenue
Center Valley, Pennsylvania 18034-9568

Dear Dr. Dailey

I am writing to apply for position number 42, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140. I will be available for interviews at the December 1998 meeting of the APA.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, my transcripts, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which wanted an AOC in history of philosophy in environmental ethics, neither of which I had. Also, note the apology at the end, since they had requested that the department's dossier be sent at a non-standard time, but the department didn't want to do so.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Lisa Portmess
Chair, Department of Philosophy
Box 404
Gettysburg College
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325

Dear Professor Portmess,

I am writing to apply for position number 50, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140.

Although I do not list history of philosophy as an area of competence, I would be able to teach a standard undergraduate course in early modern philosophy (e.g., Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant) or in early modern political philosophy (e.g., Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau), and would very much welcome the opportunity to do so. I would also be interested in expanding my interests in applied ethics and ethical theory to environmental ethics.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer. It is our department's policy to send the dossier at the time of application; I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which required that Ph. D. requirements be satisfied before I expected to have mine satisfied.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Chair, Search Committee
Department of Philosophy
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida 32816-1352

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for position number 74, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140. Although I will not satisfy the requirements for my Ph. D. until March, perhaps even May, of 1999, I hope that you will nevertheless consider my application.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, syllabi from courses for which I have been a teaching assistant, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which wanted an AOS in either social/pol phil or feminist philosophy, which I didn't have.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Dr. Stephen Rowe,
Chair, Department of Philosophy
Grand Valley State University
1 Campus Drive
Allendale, Michigan 49401-9403

Dear Dr. Rowe,

I am writing to apply for position number 96, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140.

Although I am not currently specializing in social/political philosophy or in feminist philosophy, I have had considerable immersion in both, and would very much welcome the opportunity to do further research and teaching in those areas. In addition to graduate course work and teaching in political philosophy, I am also familiar with those themes of feminist philosophy that arise at its intersections with applied ethics and political philosophy, such as abortion, pornography, affirmative action, commercial surrogate motherhood, and political equality.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, my graduate transcript, a statement of my teaching philosophy, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which called for an interest in human rights. Since that wasn't a category I used in my C. V., I mentioned the ways in which my work overlapped with that area.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

The Search Committee
Department of Philosophy
University of Chicago
1010 East 59th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for position number 116, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140.

My background in the area of human rights comes from many areas. First, I have taught on issues in applied ethics such as abortion, euthanasia, affirmative action, civil disobedience, and punishment. Second, I have both been a teaching assistant for both undergraduate and graduate courses in political philosophy. In "Justice", we examined utilitarian, libertarian, egalitarian liberal, and communitarian theories of justice. In "Responsibilities for Public Action", a course for students getting their master's degrees in public policy at the J. F. K. School of Government, Harvard, we examined a wide array of practical and theoretical issues surrounding human rights, including the limits human rights place on legitimate political authority, their implications for intervention in the internal affairs of other nations, their implications for the distribution of health care resources, and other related issues. Third, my coursework in normative democratic theory addressed the question of whether people's rights to liberty and equality acted as a constraint on democracy or as constituent elements within democracy. Fourth, as my statement of future research interests indicate, I have an active interest in ethical theory which focuses in a general way on theories of rights, their sources and their implications. And finally, Anthony Gray and I gave joint public lectures on just war theory, focusing on Michael Walzer's views in *Just and Unjust Wars*. I would very much welcome the opportunity to do further teaching and research in any of these areas.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms. My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which requested dissertation title and expected completion date.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Harper/Schmidt Instructor Search
The University of Chicago
Box 79
1116 East 59th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for position number 117, advertised in Jobs for Philosophers, volume 140.

The title of my dissertation is "The Misguided Motivations behind Moral Relativism," and I expect to complete the requirements necessary for obtaining my Ph. D. in Philosophy by May, 1999.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a statement of my teaching methods, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
rstreiff@mit.edu
Work: (617) 258-0773
Home: (617) 868-5149

Cover letter for a job listing which wanted Bioethics as an AOS, which I didn't have.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Carl Wellman
Chair, Ethics Search Committee
Department of Philosophy
Campus Box 1073
Washington University
One Brookings Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63130-4899

Dear Professor Wellman,

I am writing to apply for position number 137, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140.

Although I do not list bioethics as an area of specialization, many of my interests in applied ethics include bioethical topics, such as abortion, euthanasia, commercial surrogate motherhood, and issues of paternalism, and I would very much welcome the opportunity to teach courses in bioethics.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which required phil of law and environmental ethics, which weren't listed on my C. V.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

December 12, 1998

Philosophy Search Committee
Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54702-4004

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for position number 141, advertised in Jobs for Philosophers, volume 140.

Although my exposure to philosophy of law and environmental ethics have been somewhat limited, I would very much welcome the opportunity to expand my interests in applied ethics, ethical theory, and political philosophy into those areas.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, my transcripts, some student evaluations, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. I apologize for my writing sample being a few pages over your requested limit.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter which required a "publication in biotechnology and ethics", which I didn't have. Thankfully, they looked at my application anyway.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 24, 1998

Professor Daniel Wikler
Chair, Search Committee
Program in Medical Ethics
University of Wisconsin
1300 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Dear Professor Wikler,

I am writing to apply for position number 144, advertised in Jobs for Philosophers, volume 140.

As my training in bioethics comes largely from the classes for which I have been a teaching assistant, and as my dissertation focuses primarily on metaethical issues, I do not have any writings on biotechnology and ethics at this time. I include as my writing sample a chapter from my dissertation.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries; upon request, however, I can forward you several of the original student evaluation forms.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job listing which only wanted a C. V., and notice of availability for interviews at the APA.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

November 25, 1998

Dr. Edwin Mares
Department of Philosophy
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington, New Zealand

Dear Dr. Mares,

I am writing to inquire about the particulars for position number 198, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140. I will be available for interviews at the Eastern APA meeting in December.

Attached is a copy of my curriculum vitae.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for an NIH bioethics Postdoc. I was confused about what they wanted in the application.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

January 12, 1999

Marion Danis
Department of Clinical Bioethics
Warren G. Magnuson Clinical Center
National Institutes of Health
Building 10 Room 1C118
10 Center Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-1156

Dear Ms. Danis,

I am writing to apply for one of the two-year postdoctoral fellowships advertised as position number 40 in Jobs for Philosophers, volume 139.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae, a writing sample and my statement of interest. (While the advertisement in Jobs for Philosophers did not mention a writing sample, the information on your web site did.) My dossier, including my letters of reference, is in a separate sealed envelope included in this express mail package.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a one year position. Listing mentioned continental.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

February 3, 1999

Search Committee
Department of Philosophy
Wellesley College
106 Central St.
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02481

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to apply for one-year position in value theory/continental philosophy that begins next year. As you can see from my curriculum vitae, my exposure to continental philosophy has been very limited, and my strength lies in value theory.

Enclosed are copies of my curriculum vitae, my writing sample, a set of my teaching evaluations, a summary statement of some of my student evaluations, and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching fellows each year, out of some three hundred positions from which people could have been nominated. M. I. T.'s student evaluation system is undergoing revisions, and the attached are the only available summaries.

My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be mailed by my department's placement officer.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Cover letter for a job for which I had missed the deadline, and which wanted feminism as an AOC, which I didn't have.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

February 20, 1999

James Conlon
Philosophy Department
Mount Mary College
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222

Dear Professor Conlon,

I am writing to apply for your tenure-track, applied ethics position that begins in the fall of 1999 and that is at the rank of assistant professor. I realize I have missed the deadline of February 15, but I hope that you will nonetheless consider my candidacy for the position.

Although I do not list feminist theory as an area of competence, I am familiar with those issues that arise at its intersections with applied ethics and political philosophy, such as abortion, pornography, affirmative action, commercial surrogate motherhood, and political equality.

Attached are copies of my curriculum vitae and a letter regarding my receipt of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Student Teaching from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. This award is presented to five teaching assistants each year, out of some three hundred positions. My dossier, including my letters of reference, will be forwarded to you by my department's placement officer. If there are any other materials you require, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
rstreiff@mit.edu

Letter regarding an undergraduate lecture and a campus visit.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

January 15, 1999

Dr. Thomas J. Burke, Jr.
Department of Philosophy
Hillsdale College
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242

Dear Dr. Burke,

I decided to do my mock lecture on euthanasia. Enclosed are the two articles I will be focusing on. I would appreciate it if you could make them available in time for interested people to have a look at them before the lecture.

As I e-mailed, I arranged for my flight. I arrive in Detroit at 4:56 p.m., Sunday, the 24th, on American flight 23, and I leave from Detroit at 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, the 26th, on American flight 547. The total cost was \$364.50.

I have not yet booked a hotel room. Could you please e-mail me the name of a place near campus?

I look forward to meeting everyone.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
rstreiff@mit.edu

Letter of thanks for a campus visit.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

February 1, 1999

Dr. Thomas J. Burke, Jr.
Department of Philosophy
Hillsdale College
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242

Dear Tom,

I wanted to let you know that I enjoyed my visit to Hillsdale very much. It was a pleasure meeting the faculty, and I enjoyed meeting the students. This being my first campus visit, I was a bit nervous, but everyone I met was very friendly and made me feel welcome. Please extend my thanks to the other faculty members, and if you have the opportunity, to the Provost and the Assistant to the President as well.

I eagerly await any news you might have regarding my candidacy.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Streiffer

Letter accompanying additional supporting materials.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

March 8, 1998

Professor Daniel Wikler
Chair, Search Committee
Program in Medical Ethics
University of Wisconsin
1300 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Dear Professor Wikler,

In support of my application for the biotechnology and ethics position (position number 144, advertised in *Jobs for Philosophers*, volume 140), I am sending you by way of attachments to this e-mail message a second writing sample entitled "Moral Relativism and Practical Reason", a sample paper and selected handouts developed for students in Philosophy and Public Affairs, and a sample paper and selected handouts developed for students in Responsibilities of Public Action. By way of fax, I am sending you a selection of my student evaluations.

I believe the teaching evaluations and course materials attest to the quality of my teaching, but more importantly, I believe they show my strength in accurately and clearly conveying complex philosophical arguments to non-philosophers. Very few of the students I have taught either at the Kennedy School of Government or at M. I. T. have had much, if any, experience in philosophy, and yet one of the themes running through the evaluations is how successful I am at explaining the concepts and the arguments to them nonetheless. Given the inter-disciplinary nature of the job position, it seems that this would be a particularly valuable skill to have.

If there are any other supporting materials you would find useful, please let me know.

Respectfully yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Letter of acceptance. This was only sent after much discussion with the search committee regarding the details of the position, salary, start up package, teaching load, etc. Apart from teaching load, which is a standard question, other details are NOT discussed prior to the search committee indicating their interest in hiring you. And, two senior professors on my dissertation committee approved the contract prior to my signing and returning it.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

April 13, 1998

Professor Norm Fost
Chair, Search Committee
Program in Medical Ethics
University of Wisconsin
1300 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Dear Norm,

Enclosed is the original offer. I have signed it, and am returning it to you to indicate my happy acceptance. Once again, I am thrilled at the prospect of working with you and with everyone else in the Program in Medical Ethics and in the Philosophy Department, I appreciate the speed with which you have managed to accomplish everything, and please extend my thanks to everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules for me.

As I mentioned, Catherine, Samuel, and I will be flying out sometime soon to be looking for a place to live. We hope that we can get together with people while we are there.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Streiffer
(rstreiff@mit.edu)

Questions to be prepared for:

- Research
 - Why did I choose this dissertation topic
 - Would you make any changes in your dissertation if you were to do it all over again.
 - What contribution does it make to the field?
 - Briefly explain your dissertation
 - Briefly tell us about your research interests
- Teaching
 - How do you feel about teaching introductory courses?
 - How do you motivate students?
 - What is your teaching philosophy?

Questions to ask

- How many undergraduate majors?
- How many graduate students? (make sure you know if they have a graduate program or not)
- Size of classes?
- Children of the faculty?
- Locale?

Notes about courses I might be asked about. As you can see, some of the courses are more worked out than others, although for the ones dealt with briefly here, I probably had worked up a syllabus for it if it was in one of my areas. Also, at the beginning are notes about teaching philosophy.

Teaching Objectives

- Introduction to the views

 - Primary texts

 - Slow pace

 - Generously detailed handouts

 - Generous access outside of class

- Develop critical thinking skills

 - Structure the syllabus so as to reflect the dialectic

- Develop their own views

 - Latitude in paper assignments

 - Lots of opportunity for discussion inside & outside of class

 - Small study groups

 - Computer-aided discussion groups

Intro to Problems of Philosophy

- Ethics

 - Metaethics

 - Mackie

 - Brink

 - Utilitarianism

 - Mill

 - Carritt

 - Kantianism

 - Political Philosophy

 - Justification of the state

 - Socrates

 - Rawls

- Epistemology

 - Skepticism about the external world

 - Descartes

 - Hume

 - Ayer

 - Austin

- Metaphysics

 - Personal identity

 - Cartesian dualism

 - Psychological Theory

- Philosophy of Mind

 - Turing

 - Searle

Free Will
Causation

Intro Ethics (historical)

Socrates
Plato
Aristotle
Kant
Mill
Rawls

Intro Ethics (normative)

Metaethics
 Moral Justification
 Moral Epistemology
Ethical Theory
 Utilitarianism
 Kantianism
Puzzles of Ethical Theory
 Moral Luck
 Trolley Problem
Environmental Ethics

Business Ethics

Sexual harassment
Product liability
Codes of conduct
Obligations to customers (e.g., deceptive advertising)
Obligations to public (e.g., environmental issues)

Metaphysics

Free Will
Causation
Personal Identity
Mind/Body Problem

Epistemology (upper level)

Skepticism
 Descartes (external world)
 Hume, Goodman (induction)
 Mackie (morality)
 Kripke, Quine (meaning)

Epistemology (upper level)

Skepticism
 Descartes
Perception
 Direct Realism
 Indirect Realism
 Phenomenalism

- Perceptual Experience
- Causal Theory of Perception
- Knowledge
 - Gettier
 - Causal Theory
 - Nozick
 - Goldman
- Justification
 - Foundationalism
 - Coherentism
 - Reliabilism
 - Internal or Externalism
- Skepticism again
 - Stroud
 - Nozick
 - Stroud

Philosophy of Language

- Reference and Descriptions
 - Classical
 - Frege
 - Russell
 - Reference & Definite Descriptions
 - Strawson
 - Donnellan
 - Kripke
 - Causal Theory
 - Searle Proper Names
 - Kripke "Naming and Necessity"
 - Putnam Meaning and Reference
 - Problems for the CT
 - Dummett "Note on an attempted refutation of Frege"
 - Searle "Proper Names and Intentionality"
 - Kripke "A Puzzle about Belief"
 - Indexicals
 - Kaplan
 - Perry

Theories of Meaning
Idea Based
Verificationism
Truth-Condition
Intention

Philosophy of Mind
Mental States
Behaviorism
Functionalism
Phyiscalism
Instrumentalism
Eliminativism
Mental Content
Putnam
Burge
Early Fodor
Stalnaker

Political Philosophy
Utilitarianism
Libertarianism
Egalitarian Liberalism
Communitarianism

Early Modern Philosophy
Descartes
Locke
Berkeley
Hume
Kant

Applied Ethics
Abortion
Euthanasia
Punishment
Civil Disobedience
Cloning

Ethics (upper level undergrad)
Metaethics

Grad Political Philosophy
Rawls

Grad Applied Ethics
Abortion

Grad Ethics
Metaethics

Statement of teaching objectives for ethics.

Statement of Teaching Objectives for Robert Streiffer

One reason I enjoy teaching ethics is that it is easy to spark interest in the issues. Most students see them as relevant, and many already have opinions about the various topics. This leaves, I believe, three main teaching objectives for undergraduate classes in ethics.

My first aim is to familiarize the students with a body of well-developed, carefully nuanced views about the topics addressed in the course. Because an important aspect of education is to introduce students to the thoughts of great minds, I believe in mostly using primary rather than secondary sources, and I believe that this almost always involves pacing the course more slowly than many others would. Students must have time to absorb the material. In addition to regular papers, I believe that assigning frequent, short writing assignments, of half a page or so, on particular sections of the texts helps students learn to read carefully and critically.

My second aim in teaching ethics is to help students develop the critical thinking skills necessary for evaluating the various theories under discussion. When these theories concern about applied ethics, this often involves overcoming their tendency to some relatively undeveloped version of subjectivism and convincing them that there really are better and worse arguments about controversial topics. When these theories concern more esoteric topics, such as metaethical issues in moral psychology, the challenge is to get the students to realize the motives for the various metaethical positions and to understand why metaethical views have broad implications for the overall shape of morality, for its justification and force, and for its epistemology. In upper-level classes, I think that it is also important for students to see philosophy as an ongoing dialog, which is carried on most frequently in journals and anthologies. I believe that the choice of course readings should reflect this dialectic as it moves from an original work by one philosopher, to a response by another philosopher, and then often to a rejoinder by the original author.

My third aim in teaching ethics is to encourage students to develop their own views about the various topics discussed in the course, albeit views that are informed by the readings and the class discussion. I believe this involves giving them considerable latitude in their paper assignments, and promoting lively discussion inside and outside of class. Small study groups, supplemented by computer-based discussion groups, can help accomplish this aim.

With respect to graduate level courses in ethics, I think the second aim needs much less attention, and this leaves more time to focus on the first and third aims. I would again emphasize the focus on primary sources, and the need to pace the reading for the class. Small, in-class presentations given by the students often help discussion, and motivate the students to look at issues that interest them in more depth than they perhaps would otherwise.

One of the versions of my C.V at the time. In a previous version, I had metaethics as an AOS but didn't have pol phil as an AOS. Under guidance from my dissertation chair, I changed this.

Robert Streiffer

Office:
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
Phone: (617) 258-0773
Fax: (617) 253-5017
E-mail: rstreiff@mit.edu

Home:
1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Apartment 61
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138-5310
Phone: (617) 868-5149

Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Ph. D. candidate in Philosophy
Degree expected May 1999
Coursework finished in December, 1995

Reed College, Portland, Oregon
B. A. in Philosophy, 1993

Areas of Specialization

Ethics; Applied Ethics; Political Philosophy.

Areas of Competence

Metaphysics; Philosophy of Language; Philosophy of Mind; Logic; Contemporary Analytic Philosophy.

Teaching Experience

Responsibilities of Public Action, for Arthur Applbaum at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Fall 1998, Fall 1997

For Masters students in the Kennedy School's Masters in Public Policy program. Conducted weekly discussion sections, helped students with drafts of written work, and graded papers and final exam. Topics included democratic theory, contractualism, utilitarianism, abortion, affirmative action, commercial surrogate motherhood, paternalism, philosophy of law, civil disobedience, official disobedience, and political ethics.

Justice, for Alison McIntyre at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Spring 1997

Conducted weekly discussion sections, helped students with drafts of written work, and graded papers and final exam. Topics included utilitarianism, libertarianism, egalitarian liberalism, and communitarianism.

Introduction to Problems of Philosophy, for Judith Thomson at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Fall 1996, Fall 1995

Conducted weekly discussion sections, helped students with drafts of written work, and graded papers and final exam. Topics included metaethics, ethical theory, political philosophy, free will, personal identity, skepticism about the material world, and the mind/body problem.

Philosophy and Public Affairs, for Sarah Stroud at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Spring 1996

Conducted weekly discussion sections, helped students with drafts of written work, and graded papers and final exam. Topics were abortion, euthanasia, and punishment.

Introduction to Problems of Philosophy, for Alex Byrne at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Spring 1995

Conducted weekly discussion sections, helped students with drafts of written work, and graded papers and final exam. Topics included philosophy of religion, metaethics, ethical theory, induction and causation, free will, personal identity, skepticism about the material world, and the mind/body problem.

Philosophy and Public Affairs, for Michael Hardimon at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Fall 1994

Conducted weekly discussion sections, helped students with drafts of written work, and graded papers and final exam. Topics were abortion, punishment, pornography, and civil disobedience.

Logic, for Mark Bedau at Reed College

Fall 1992

Held office hours, graded homework assignments, mid-term, and final exam. Topics included proof and model theory for quantificational logic, and completeness and soundness proofs.

Papers Read

“Civil Disobedience and the Scientists at Los Alamos”

The Teagle Seminar on Science and Ethics, Hood College, Maryland, May 1999

“Against Harman’s Recent Defense of Moral Relativism”

Harvard – M. I. T. Graduate Philosophy Conference, Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 1997

“Just War Theory,” with Anthony Gray

Independent Activities Period, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring 1995

Honors

Dean’s Award for Excellence in Student Teaching, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Fall 1998

Dean’s Award for Excellence in Student Teaching, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Fall 1997

Full Graduate Fellowship, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1993 – 1997

Phi Beta Kappa, Reed College, 1993

Graduate Courses Attended

Issues in Moral Philosophy (The Killing/Letting Die Distinction, Theories of Rights), taught by Thomas Scanlon, Harvard University (Audited)

Topics in Moral Philosophy (Metaethics and the Killing/Letting Die Distinction), taught by Judith Thomson (Audited)

Normative Democratic Theory (Riker, Dahl, Rawls, Ely, Christiano), taught by Joshua Cohen (Audited)

Topics in Moral Philosophy (Metaethics and Moral Psychology), taught by David Brink

Topics in Moral Philosophy (Metaethics), taught by Ralph Wedgwood (Audited)

Political Philosophy (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Marx), taught by Joshua Cohen

Topics in Mental Representation (Content), taught by Robert Stalnaker (Audited)

Topics in the Philosophy of Language, taught by Richard Cartwright

Modal Logic, taught by Robert Stalnaker

Problems of Mental Representation, taught by Ned Block and Robert Stalnaker

Topics in History of Philosophy (Berkeley and Hume), taught by Robert Fogelin

Problems in Metaphysics, taught by Judith Thomson and Robert Stalnaker

Logic II, taught by George Boolos

Proseminar II, taught by Judith Thomson and Robert Stalnaker

Proseminar I, taught by Paul Horwich

Dissertation Abstract

Dissertation Title: "The Misguided Motivations behind Moral Relativism"

Dissertation Committee: Judith Thomson (Chair), Joshua Cohen, Ralph Wedgwood

Why be a moral relativist? My thesis explores three answers to this question—three motivations for moral relativism—and seeks to defuse each.

The primary motivation behind moral relativism is metaethical: if moral relativism is understood to be the thesis that moral sentences have an indexical component to their meaning which allows both parties to intractable moral disagreements to speak truly, then to many people, moral relativism seems to offer the best explanation of the intractable moral disagreements we see surrounding certain fundamental moral issues. The standard objection to moral relativism concedes that moral relativism would, if true, explain the intractable disagreements we see, but responds by noting that it is counterintuitive to think that the parties to intractable moral disagreements are both speaking truly; to the contrary, they seem to be contradicting one another. In my first chapter, I extend the standard objection in two ways. First, I argue that moral relativism conflicts with a wider variety of linguistic intuitions than is usually recognized. It conflicts with our intuitions about how moral sentences behave when embedded in moral truth-ascriptions and moral belief-ascriptions, and about whether it is ever appropriate to use a moral sentence to express a proposition about someone else's morality. Second, I argue that even if we were to grant that moral relativism were true, it still would not provide us with any explanation, even a bad one, of the intractable moral disagreements in need of explanation. *A fortiori*, it would not provide us with the best explanation of those disagreements.

A different version of moral relativism is motivated by issues in moral psychology; more particularly, by beliefs about the relationship between morality, practical reason, and motivation. Many philosophers have supposed that the reasons there are for an agent to do something ultimately depend upon the desires of that agent. But given the diversity of desires, it will then turn out that for any action you like, it will be possible for there to be an agent for whom there is no reason to perform that action. At the same time, however, it seems plausible that if morality requires an agent to do something, then there is a reason for the agent to do that thing. Thus, the moral relativist concludes that for any action you like, it is possible for there to be an agent who is not morally required to perform that action. In my second chapter, I accept the claim that if morality requires an agent to do something, then there is a reason for that agent to do that thing, but I reject the argument from the diversity of desires to the nonexistence of practical reasons that apply to all agents. I examine four different accounts of practical reason that support that argument, the common feature among them being that they tie an agent's practical reasons to the agent's desires in epistemically ideal circumstances. I argue that they all fail. I conclude that on the proper understanding of the relationship between motivation, reasons for action, and rationality, it is plausible to suppose that there can be reasons for an agent to do something that are unrelated to the agent's desires.

A third motivation arises from normative ethics: moral relativism is said to provide an especially compelling rationale for tolerance. In my third chapter, I examine an argument, put forward by both Gilbert Harman and David Wong, that moral relativism provides the best rationale for why we ought to be tolerant of people with moral views other than our own, so long as those views are reasonably held and consistent with the facts. After clarifying the proper scope of tolerance, I argue that it can be adequately explained by appealing to Rawls' notion of reasonable pluralism, which is weaker and more plausible than moral relativism.

Future Research Interests

My future research interests roughly divide into those concerning applied ethics and those concerning ethical theory more generally.

Within applied ethics, many of my interests involve the problem of abortion, which lies at the intersection of a bewildering but fascinating array of moral questions. Perhaps the most salient question is what constitutes an impermissible killing. In her ground-breaking article "A Defense of Abortion," Judith Thomson argued that granting that the fetus has a right to life does not settle the question as to whether abortion is impermissible killing. Thomson argued that we would also need to establish that the means by which the abortion is performed themselves deprive it of something to which it has a right. Some people have thought that in cases in which the pregnancy is due to voluntary intercourse, it can be shown that the fetus does have a right to the use of the mother's body, and hence, that in those cases, if the fetus has a right to life, then abortion is an impermissible killing. I would like to explore this line of reasoning.

The problem of abortion also involves the moral question as to what the laws governing abortions should be, given the fundamental disagreement surrounding its permissibility. I am not persuaded by Dworkin's recent argument in *Life's Dominion* that because abortion is fundamentally a religious issue, laws prohibiting abortions violate the separation of church and state. But it has also been argued that laws prohibiting abortions are illegitimate because they impose severe constraints on women's liberty on grounds that women are not unreasonable in rejecting. This argument is an application of the general strategy of tolerance which I endorse in the third chapter of my thesis. Is this application successful?

Within ethical theory, my interests primarily revolve around rights. For example, I am interested in the distinction between rights and the worth of rights. The rich person and the poor person may both have the right to express their political views; but that right is worth much more to the rich person than the poor person because the rich person has the means necessary to make his exercise of that right effective. But while there is a distinction between rights and the worth of rights, many people want to claim nonetheless that for some fundamental rights, such as equality of opportunity or freedom of expression, to deny people the means necessary for making those rights worth something is itself a violation of those rights. But how is this claim to be made out, and for which rights does it hold true? More generally, what implications does the fact that someone has a right have for what we ought to do?

I am also interested in exploring different accounts of the source of rights. The presence of rights is often held to cause trouble for consequentialist moral theories, but arguments about what rights people have often take a consequentialist form. Ascriptions of rights are often defended by citing some positive value, which the right ascribed is then said to protect or foster. When someone says that people have a right to life or privacy or liberty, for example, he or she will often defend the ascription by citing the positive value of life or privacy or liberty, and by arguing that it is because these are valuable, or because of the particular way in which these are valuable, that people have a right to them. But doing what is required in order to respect one person's right sometimes requires failing to respect that very same right in others, perhaps in many others, and if what justifies the ascription of the right to begin with is the protection or fostering of something that has value, then it is difficult to see why we should not merely opt for that course of action that minimizes the overall number of rights violations.

References

- Judith Jarvis Thomson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (617) 253-0216
Joshua Cohen, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (617) 253-5237
Ralph Wedgwood, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (919) 549-0661
Arthur Applbaum, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, (617) 495-80