

Humanities Center Brown Bag Colloquium Series 2021-2022

Some Thoughts On Reparations and Conscientious Exemptions

Examples play a variety of roles in philosophy. I use the example of a relay race to shed light on our current situation where some think that descendants of slaves, people wrongly interred, and others severely exploited deserve reparations. I argue in Rawlsian fashion that the least well-off deserve fair equality of opportunity regardless of the causes of their plight but that the history of past injustices based on race, gender and ethnicity should be taught in the schools and shown on TV in specials devoted to those issues. When it comes to conscientious exemptions, I start with clear cases where exemptions should be allowed in the law and conclude that an exemption is permissible only if there is some plausible moral grounds that is the basis for the exemption. A pharmacist's refusing to fill a prescription for the morning after pill could meet this condition and that refusal would be justified if there was not an undue burden on the woman for her to get the pill and the refusal was respectful and discreet. A refusal to bake a cake for a gay or divorced couple on religious grounds would not qualify.



Bruce Russell

Professor of Philosophy
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Tuesday, November 9, 2021

12:30PM—1:30PM

Join us In Person:

2339 Faculty Administration Building
2nd Floor Conference Room



Bruce Russell is a Professor of Philosophy at Wayne State University. His areas of specialization are ethics, epistemology, philosophy of religion, philosophy of film, and metaphilosophy. He is working on a manuscript titled, *Philosophy By Example: An Introduction to Analytic Philosophy*.