

# ALEXANDER ZAMBRANO, PhD.

*Curriculum Vitae (October 2017)*

Department of Philosophy  
University of Colorado Boulder  
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## **Areas of Specialization**

Biomedical Ethics, Applied Ethics

## **Areas of Competence**

History of Philosophy (Ancient and Early Modern), Philosophy of Race, Environmental Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Normative Ethics

## **Academic Employment**

Lecturer, University of Colorado Boulder, Summer 2017- present.

Graduate Part-Time Instructor, University of Colorado Boulder, Fall 2015-Spring 2017.

## **Education**

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Colorado Boulder, 2017.

B.A., Philosophy, Loyola Marymount University, 2012.

## **Dissertation:** *Taking From the Dead: An Examination of Cadaveric Organ Procurement*

Since the inception of organ transplantation, the majority of transplantable organs are taken from people after they have died. Consequently, the most important ethical and policy question that has emerged from the organ transplantation literature is: How should we procure organs from dead people? A necessary step in answering this question, however, requires giving an account of what obligations we have towards organ donors. In my dissertation, I clarify what we owe to organ donors by answering central questions regarding how we ought to respect people's autonomy when removing their organs. Specifically, I argue (i) that the main argument in favor of a policy of presumed consent is unsound, (ii) that when families 'veto' their family member's decision to donate, they do not violate their loved one's autonomy, (iii) that obtaining a patient's consent before removing her organs is not morally required in order to respect her autonomy, and (iv) that under certain circumstances, people have posthumous rights over what happens to their organs after their deaths.

**Committee:** David Boonin (advisor), Eric Chwang, Alastair Norcross, Chris Heathwood, and Benjamin Hale.

## **Publications (Peer-Reviewed)**

"Fewer Mistakes and Presumed Consent" forthcoming in *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*.

"Patient Autonomy and the Family Veto Problem in Organ Procurement," *Social Theory and Practice* 43 (1): 180-200, 2017.

“Why Alcoholics Ought to Compete Equally for Liver Transplants,” *Bioethics* 30 (9): 689–697, 2016.

“Locked Up and Shut Out: The Suffering of Incarcerated Psychopaths,” *American Journal of Bioethics Neuroscience* 7(3): 152-154, 2016.

“Animal Experimentation as a Form of Rescue,” *Between the Species* Vol. 19, Issue 1: 52-79, 2016.

### **Works in Progress**

“Consent and Cadavers: The Moral Role of Consent in Organ Procurement” (under review)

“A Defense of Ad Blocking and Consumer Inattention” (with Caleb Pickard) (under review)

“Organ Conscriptioin and Posthumous Rights” (in progress)

### **Awards and Fellowships**

Philosophy Department Fellowship, University of Colorado Boulder, Fall 2016.

Graduate School Summer Fellowship, University of Colorado Boulder, Summer 2016. (competitive)

The Claudia Mills Teaching Award (awarded annually to the Philosophy Department’s best teaching assistant), University of Colorado Boulder, 2015. (competitive)

Summer Philosophy Research Grant, University of Colorado Boulder, 2015.

Summer Philosophy Research Grant, University of Colorado Boulder, 2014.

Latin Study Grant: Center for Western Civilization, University of Colorado Boulder, Summer 2013.

### **Presentations**

“Comments on David Limbaugh’s “Animals, advance directives, and prudence: Should we let the cheerfully demented die?” Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado Boulder, Summer 2016. (invited)

“Consent and Cadavers: The Moral Role of Consent in Organ Procurement,” Summer Seminar, University of Colorado Boulder, Summer 2016. (invited)

“Is consent necessary for organ retrieval?” Center for Values and Social Policy, University of Colorado Boulder, Spring 2016. (invited)

“A defense of ad blocking and consumer inattention” (with Caleb Pickard), Center for Values and Social Policy, University of Colorado Boulder, Spring 2016. (invited)

“Comments on Brian Berkey’s “The Demandingness of Morality: Toward a Reflective Equilibrium”, Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado Boulder, Summer 2015. (invited)

“Why Alcoholics Ought to Compete Equally for Liver Transplants” The American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) Annual Meeting, Houston, Texas, 2015 (paper accepted but was unable to attend). (refereed)

“Why Alcoholics Ought To Compete Equally for Liver Transplants” Bowling Green Graduate Philosophy Conference on Medicine and Philosophy, Fall 2014. (refereed)

“Comments on Matt Leonard’s ‘Mirror Realism’” American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco, 2013. (invited)

“Totality States are not the Truthmakers for Negative Truths,”  
University of Kansas Graduate Philosophy Conference, 2012. (refereed)

## **Teaching**

### **Lecturer, University of Colorado Boulder**

Introduction to Ancient Philosophy, Fall 2017

Bioethics, Fall 2017

Introduction to Philosophy, Summer 2017.

### **Graduate Part-Time Instructor, University of Colorado Boulder**

Introduction to Bioethics, Spring 2017.

Introduction to Philosophy, Spring 2016

Philosophy and Society (Applied Ethics), Fall 2015.

### **Teaching Assistant, University of Colorado Boulder**

Philosophy and Society (Applied Ethics), Dr. Alastair Norcross, Spring 2015.

Introduction to Philosophy, Dr. Garrett Bredeson, Fall 2014.

Introduction to Philosophy, Dr. Dan Kaufman Spring, 2014.

Environmental Ethics, Dr. Duncan Purves, Fall, 2013.

## **Professional Service**

Philosophy Graduate Student Co-President, University of Colorado Boulder, Spring 2016-Spring 2017.

Graduate Student Organizer for *Minorities and Philosophy* (MAP), University of Colorado Boulder, Spring 2016-Summer 2017

Graduate Student representative for the Climate Committee at the University of Colorado Boulder, Department of Philosophy, Fall 2015-Spring 2016.

Referee, Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado Boulder, Summer 2016.

Lead Organizer, Graduate Work in Progress Talks, University of Colorado Boulder, Fall 2015-Spring 2016

Lead Organizer, 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, University of Colorado Boulder, 2014.

Referee, Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, University of Colorado Boulder, 2013-present

### **Memberships**

The American Association of Mexican Philosophers  
The American Philosophical Association

### **Graduate Coursework (University of Colorado Boulder)**

Ethics Proseminar	David Boonin
Philosophy of Language	David Barnett
Medieval Metaphysics	Robert Pasnau
Metaphysics and Epistemology	Graeme Forbes
Aristotle's Ethics	Mitzi Lee
Seminar on Vagueness	David Barnett
Bioethics and Public Policy	Eric Chwang
Environmental Philosophy	Benjamin Hale
Modal Logic	Graeme Forbes
Metaphysics	Carol Cleland
Seminar on Well-Being	Chris Heathwood
Modern Philosophy Seminar	Dan Kaufman
Seminar on Fundamentality	Raul Saucedo
Philosophy and Animals	Alastair Norcross
Seminar on Value (Metaethics)	Graham Oddie

### **References**

*David Boonin (dissertation advisor)*  
Professor of Philosophy  
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*Eric Chwang*  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Rutgers University (Camden)  
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*Alastair Norcross*  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
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## Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation, “Taking From the Dead: An Examination of Cadaveric Organ Procurement” attempts to answer the question, How should we remove organs from the dead? While much of the scholarly discussion surrounding organ procurement has focused on ways to increase our retrieval rates of transplantable organs, there remains much to be clarified regarding what duties and obligations we have towards people who choose to donate their organs, as well as what moral and legal rights they have. My dissertation fills this gap, by answering central questions concerning how we ought to respect people’s autonomy when removing their organs.

In Chapter 1, “Fewer Makes and Presumed Consent” (which is forthcoming in *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*), I consider the ethical merits of a presumed consent policy of organ procurement, a policy that many bioethicists consider superior to an “opt-in” policy. A policy of presumed consent does not require that people give their explicit consent to organ donation and instead presumes that people have consented if they fail to register a formal objection to organ donation. The main argument in favor of presumed consent says that because most Americans desire to donate their organs, presumed consent would result in more people’s desires being satisfied than an opt-in policy in which they are required to give explicit consent. I defend a novel objection to this argument, which robs proponents of their main argument in favor of presumed consent.

In Chapter 2, “Patient Autonomy and the Family Veto Problem” (which appears in *Social Theory and Practice* 43 (1): 180-200, 2017), I examine the often discussed “family veto problem,” which occurs when a family overrides their loved one’s prior decision to donate her organs. There is a consensus amongst bioethicists and clinicians that families violate the autonomy of their deceased family member when they override their family member’s prior decision to donate organs, and that this is wrong. However, I defend a new argument that this consensus is incorrect. I argue that once it is understood what respect for autonomy requires in the context of organ procurement, families do not violate the autonomy of their loved ones when they override their loved one’s decision to donate their organs.

In Chapter 3, “Consent and Cadavers” (which is currently under review), I argue that obtaining a patient’s explicit consent is not required to permissibly remove her organs after death. Many bioethicists have assumed that in order to respect a person’s autonomy, their explicit consent is required before we remove their organs. However, I argue that this assumption is incorrect because there are other ways to sufficiently respect the autonomy of organ donors without obtaining their explicit consent. It follows that organ procurement policies that do not seek explicit consent are viable policy options, so long as they satisfy other requirements for respecting patient autonomy.

In Chapter 4, “Posthumous Rights and Conscription” (which is currently being revised for publication submission), I argue that in some circumstances the claims made by living people about their bodies carry on after their deaths in the form of posthumous bodily rights. Many philosophers are skeptical of the idea that there could be bodily rights that survive after one’s death. Consequently, I develop an account of posthumous bodily rights, with a specific focus on rights over our organs. I then utilize this account to examine a policy of organ conscription, in which usable organs are taken automatically after a person’s death. Some bioethicists believe a policy of organ conscription is the best solution to increase the number of transplantable organs, but I argue that an organ conscription policy violates people’s posthumous rights regarding their organs and is therefore a morally unacceptable procurement policy.