

# Russell Powell

Boston University / Department of Philosophy  
745 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215  
516-350-2110 / [powell@bu.edu](mailto:powell@bu.edu)

[HTTP://WWW.BU.EDU/PHILO/PEOPLE/FACULTY/FULL-TIME/RUSSELL-POWELL/](http://www.bu.edu/philo/people/faculty/full-time/russell-powell/)

## EDUCATION

**Ph.D.** Philosophy, Duke University (2009)  
**M.S.** Evolutionary Biology, Duke University (2009)  
**J.D.**, *with honors*, New York University Law School (2002)  
**B.A.** Philosophy, *summa cum laude*, SUNY Binghamton (1999)

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Biology  
Philosophical Bioethics  
Legal and Political Philosophy

## HONORS

*American Council of Learned Societies New Faculty Fellow*, 2011 (declined for tenure-track job)  
*James B. Duke Fellow*, Duke University Society of Fellows  
*Phi Beta Kappa*, Binghamton University Chapter

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

**Boston University**, Department of Philosophy (since July 2011)  
*Assistant Professor*

**Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research, Vienna** (Spring 2012)  
*Visiting Fellow*, Theoretical and Ethical Problems Pertaining to Human Evolution

**Oxford University**, Faculty of Philosophy (2009-2011)  
*Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellow*, Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics  
*James Martin Research Fellow*, Institute for Science and Ethics, Oxford Martin School  
*Research Associate*, Corpus Christi College

**Johns Hopkins University**, Berman Institute of Bioethics (2008-2009)  
*Greenwall Postdoctoral Fellow*

**Georgetown University**, Department of Philosophy / Kennedy Institute of Ethics (2008-2009)  
*Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy* and *Senior Research Scholar*, respectively

## JOURNAL APPOINTMENTS

**Journal of Medical Ethics**, *Associate Editor*, British Medical Journal Group (April 2011-present)

## ARTICLES

Powell, R. (2012), "The Future of Human Evolution," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 63: 145-175.  
Powell, R. (2012), "The Evolutionary Biological Implications of Human Genetic Engineering," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 37(3): 204-226.  
Powell, R. and S. Clarke (2012), "Religion as an Evolutionary Byproduct: A Critique of the Standard Model," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 63(3): 457-486.

- Powell, R. (2012), “Convergent Evolution and the Limits of Natural Selection,” *European Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 2(3): 355-373.
- Powell, R., S. Clarke and J. Savulescu (2012). “Prioritizing the Reduction of Parasite-Stress in the Allocation of Healthcare Resources,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 35(2): 90-1.
- Powell, R., G. Kahane and J. Savulescu (2012), “Evolution, Genetic Engineering and Human Enhancement,” *Philosophy & Technology*
- Powell, R. and A. Buchanan (2011), “Breaking Evolution's Chains: The Prospect of Deliberate Genetic Modification in Humans,” *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 36(1): 6-27. Re-printed in U.S. Presidential Commission for Bioethics, Briefing Booklet 2011.
- Powell, R. (2011), “On the Nature of Species and the Moral Significance of their Extinction,” in *Oxford Handbook on Animal Ethics*, T.L. Beauchamp and R.J. Frey (eds.), Oxford University Press.
- Douglas, T., Powell, R. and Savulescu, J. (forthcoming), “Is the Creation of Artificial Life Morally Significant?,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*
- Powell, R. (forthcoming), “Human Nature and Respect for the Evolutionarily Given” *Philosophy & Technology*, DOI 10.1007/s13347-012-0090-7.
- Powell, R. (forthcoming), “Technological Thinking in Biology and the Limits of Rational Re-Design,” in *Philosophical Perspectives on the Role of Technology in Science*, S.O. Hansson (ed.), Springer.
- Powell, R. and Clarke, S. (forthcoming). “Religion, Tolerance and Intolerance” in Clarke, S. Powell, R. and Savulescu, J. (eds.), *Scientific and Conceptual Investigations of Religious Conflict*, Oxford University Press.
- Powell, R. (2010), “What’s the harm? An Evolutionary Theoretical Critique of the Precautionary Principle,” *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 20(2): 181–206.
- Douglas, T., R. Powell. K. Devolder et al. (2010), “Resisting Sparrow’s Sexy *Reductio*: Selection Principles and the Social Good,” *American Journal of Bioethics* 10(7): 16-18.
- Powell, R. (2009), “Contingency and Convergence in Macroevolution,” *Journal of Philosophy* 106(7): 390-404.
- Powell, R. and A. Buchanan (2009), “Fidelity to Constitutional Democracy and to Robust International Law,” in *Routledge Handbook of International Law*, D. Armstrong (ed.), Routledge.
- Buchanan, A. and R. Powell (2008), “Constitutional Democracy and the Rule of International Law: Are They Compatible?” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 16(3): 326-349.
- Powell, R. (2007), “Is Convergence More than an Analogy? Homoplasy and its Implications for Macroevolutionary Predictability,” *Biology and Philosophy*, vol. 22, pp. 565-578.
- Powell, R. (2007), “The Law and Philosophy of Preventive War: An Institution-Based Approach to Collective Self-Defense,” *Australian Journal of Legal Philosophy* 32: 67-89

## **BOOKS**

- Clarke, S., R. Powell and J. Savulescu (forthcoming, 2013, eds.), *Scientific and Conceptual Investigations of Religious Conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## **JOURNALS EDITED**

- Powell, R. (main editor), G. Kahane and J. Savulescu (co-eds.) (forthcoming), “Evolution, Genetic Engineering and Human Enhancement,” *Philosophy & Technology*
- Powell, R. and S. Holm (forthcoming), “Organism, Machine and Artefact: The Conceptual and Normative Challenges of Synthetic Biology,” *Studies in Hist. and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*

## **EDITORIALS / BOOK REVIEWS / MAGAZINE ARTICLES**

- Powell, R. (forthcoming). “The Philosophy of Human Evolution,” *Metascience*

- Powell, R. (2012), “Beyond the Blueprint: Genetic Exceptionalism and Enhancement.” *Philosophy Now* 91.
- Powell, R. (2012). “Governmental Coercion in the Name of Health.” *Journal of Medical Ethics* 38(6): 325-326.
- Powell, R. (2010), “Nanoethics: Big Ethical Issues with Small Technology,” *Notre Dame Phil. Reviews*

### EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP

*Philosophy and Technology*, Executive Editor, May 2012 - Present

### PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING

Panelist, National Endowment for the Arts, Collaborative Research Grant Program (2012)  
 U.S. President’s Commission on Bioethics (2010): Synthetic Biology  
 Nuffield Council on Bioethics (2011): Synthetic Biology

### REFeree

*Biology and Philosophy*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, *American Journal of Bioethics*,  
*Mind*, *Philosophy & Technology*, *Wellcome Trust Foundation*, *MIT Press*

### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

**Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP**, New York, NY  
 Attorney, Complex Mass Torts / Pharmaceutical Liability Litigation, 2001-2004  
 Awards: *Pro Bono Publico Service Award*, 2002-2003 (immigration asylum)

**The Legal Aid Society New York**, NY: *Student Attorney Practitioner*, Aug. 2001-May 2002

**Animal Legal Defense Fund**, *Law Professional Volunteer*, 2002-2004

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- *Healthcare Ethics– Graduate Level* (Boston University, 2012/2013)
- *Ethics in Action* (Boston University, 2012)
- *Philosophy of Biology – Graduate Level* (Boston University, 2012/2013)
- *Biomedical Ethics* (Boston University, 2011/2012)
- *Applied Philosophy* (Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Summer 2012)
- *Bioethics* (Oxford University, Ethox Centre, Department of Public Health, 2011)
- *Philosophy of Science* (Oxford University, Lectures, co-taught w/ Prof. Simon Saunders 2010)
- *Ethical Theory* (Oxford University, New College, Tutorial 2010)
- *Practical Ethics* (Oxford University, St Anne’s College, Tutorial 2010)
- *Philosophy of Biology - Graduate Level* (Georgetown University, Fall 2008, Spring 2009)
- *Philosophy of Environmental Science* (Georgetown University, Spring 2009)
- *The Ethics of War and International Affairs* (Duke University, mixed Grad/UG Seminar Spring 2008)
- *Genomics, Ethics and Public Policy* (Duke University, Fall 2007)
- *Biomedical Ethics* (Duke University, Summer 2007)
- *Philosophical Problems in Constitutional Law* (Duke University, Spring 2006)
- *Ethics and Public Policy* (w/ Allen Buchanan as primary instructor, Duke University, Fall 2006)

### DISSERTATION

*Reading the Book of Life: Contingency and Convergence in Macroevolution (2009)*  
 {Supervisors: Alex Rosenberg / Robert Brandon; Committee: Dan McShea, Karen Neander}

**Abstract.** Biologists have long debated whether the shape of complex life represents the fluky culmination of an eminently unrepeatable series of contingencies, or whether there is a greater necessity to life’s grand parade of forms. Gould believed that replaying the tape of life would result in a radically different macroevolutionary outcome—a morphological menagerie bearing little resemblance to complex life as we know it. Others have argued that

the evolution of animal life is highly replicable because it is significantly constrained by physical and biological laws. In this thesis, I analyze several key theoretical concepts in this debate, especially the notion of contingency as it functions in macroevolutionary theory, and I explore methodological hurdles confronting the empirical resolution of this controversy.

### EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY MASTERS THESIS

*Extinction and Reiteration in the History of Life: A Macroevo­lutionary Dialectic* (2009)  
{Supervisor: V. Louise Roth}

**Abstract.** In this thesis, I examine the macroevolutionary dialectic between the extinction of biological forms on the one hand, and their evolutionary reiteration on the other, especially the iterated evolution of robust image-forming sensory modalities including vision, echolocation, and electrolocation.

### LAW SCHOOL THESIS

*Science and Law in the Construction of Human Races* (2002), Supervised by F. Michael Higginbotham

**Abstract.** In this thesis I explore the interaction between racist law and flawed science in perpetuating the American racial caste system in the Antebellum and post-Civil War South.

### CONFERENCES / TALKS

- ❖ *Is the Creation of Artificial Life Morally Significant?*, CAPPE, Univ. of Melbourne, Australia, 2012.
- ❖ *The Ethics of Germline Modification*, Australasian Assoc. of Phil., Wellington, New Zealand, 2012
- ❖ *Biological Evolution in a Technological Species*, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey, 2012
- ❖ *Human Evolution: Past, Present, Future*, Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution Research, Vienna, 2012
- ❖ *Biological Evolution in a Technological Species*, Boston Philosophy of Science Colloquium, 2011
- ❖ *The Ethics of Germ-Line Modification*, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey, August 2011
- ❖ *The Ethics of Germ-Line Modification*, New York University, January 2011
- ❖ *Genetic Modification and Preservation of Human Good*, Boston University, January 2011
- ❖ Organizer: *Organism and Machine: The Conceptual and Normative Challenges of Synthetic Biology*, University of Copenhagen, 2011 (w/ Sune Holm)
- ❖ *A Future Without Genetic Engineering: Medicine, Evolution and the Preservation of Human Good*, James Martin Advanced Research Seminar, Oxford University, 2010
- ❖ *The Ethics of Synthetic Biology: A Comprehensive Approach* (w/ Allen Buchanan), material presented by Buchanan at the meeting of the U.S. Presidential Commission for Bioethics, 2010
- ❖ *Genetic Engineering and the Ethics of Human Variation*, Oxford University, 2010
- ❖ *Adaptationism and the Limits of Natural Selection*, Altenberg Symposium in Theoretical Biology, Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research, University of Vienna, 2010
- ❖ *Is Religion an Adaptation or a Byproduct?* University of Edinburgh, International conference on Science and Religion, 2010 (European Society for the Study of Science and Theology).
- ❖ Organizer: *Scientific Perspectives on Religious Conflict*, University of Oxford, 2010 (with Steve Clarke)
- ❖ *Is Extinction Really Forever?* Department of Evolution & Ecology, Georgetown University (2009)
- ❖ *What's the Harm? A Skeptical Assessment of the Precautionary Principle*, Georgetown Univ. Conference on the Ethics of Emerging Biotechnologies, 2008
- ❖ *Precaution and Genetic Modification*, Johns Hopkins University, Berman Inst. of Bioethics, 2008
- ❖ *Contingency in Macroevolution*, Rutgers Univ. Philosophy Dept. Colloquium (2008)
- ❖ *Reading the Book of Life*, Florida State Univ. Department of Philosophy (2008)
- ❖ *This Gouldian View of Life*, University of Kansas, Philosophy Colloquium (2008)
- ❖ *Faculty Advisory Committee*, Provost Lecture Series: *Science & Human Nature* (2007-2008)

**UNIVERSITY SERVICE:** Admissions Committee, Accelerated Medical Program (2012-present); Adviser, Debate Society (2012-present); First-Year Student Outreach Program, Animal Ethics Module (2012).

**LANGUAGES:** Proficient in written and spoken Korean; French; Learning Turkish

**HOBBIES:** Fossil hunting, snorkeling, wildlife photography, aquariums, hiking, sports that involve balls