



CENTER FOR ETHICS IN SOCIETY

Saint Anselm College

Call for Workshop Proposals: The Ethics, Law, and Social Science of Self-Defense and Firearms

The Center for Ethics in Society at Saint Anselm College invites proposals for research papers on the ethics, law, or social science of self-defense and firearms, to be discussed at a workshop on November 11-13, 2022.

America has a complicated relationship with guns. In 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court interpreted the Second Amendment to the Constitution as protecting an individual right to own a gun. At the same time, reasonable people disagree over whether gun ownership really is a constitutional right, and what regulations are permissible under existing precedent. Guns are prevalent in entertainment (from movies to video games), and statistics suggest there are more guns in the United States than people. As a result, notwithstanding the wishes of some people and the fears of others, it is not likely that guns will be regulated out of existence any time soon.

Beyond the jurisprudential debate, scholars, activists, and the general public disagree about the ethics and justice of gun ownership and restrictions, about the consequences of gun ownership and restrictions for crime and accidental death, and about the politics of firearms, not just in the U.S. but worldwide. Even if a constitutional or moral right exists, it doesn't tell us everything we need to know about the moral obligations we have toward others in how, or whether, we manufacture, sell, own, store, and carry guns.

This proposed workshop would invite scholars from a variety of disciplines to explore these and other issues. Scholarship could address any of the following questions, and the following list should not be considered exhaustive.

1. How have firearms policies evolved historically in the U.S. and around the world? What are the politics of firearms policy changes?
2. What are the consequences of firearms policies or ownership for crime, suicide, accidental deaths, and so on?
3. Are firearms regulations just? Are "Stand Your Ground" laws just?
4. Are there certain segments of the population who should not be allowed to own a firearm?
5. Do video games and other forms of popular media bear any responsibility for gun violence?
6. What is the relationship between religious faith and guns? What is the theology of weapons ownership and self-defense?
7. Are there "common sense" solutions to gun violence that government can implement? Are there other stakeholders who could act apart from government to make a difference?
8. What are the consequences of declaring gun violence a "public health issue"?

9. What has been the relationship between politics and constitutional law, especially as it pertains to questions about the Second Amendment? Is it possible – or desirable – to separate politics from constitutional law?
10. When is and is not self-defense justified?
11. When is and is not civil resistance justified?

We will sponsor up to 12 research papers, and selected scholars will participate in an in-person workshop, hosted in Manchester, New Hampshire on November 11-13, 2022. For participation in the workshop, the Center will offer a \$750 honorarium, a generous travel stipend, and two nights of accommodation in the workshop hotel.

Proposals of no more than 250 words should state a research question and a tentative thesis or hypothesis to be explored, and identify all coauthors. **Please send proposals along with a CV to ethics@anselm.edu by June 1, 2022 to be guaranteed consideration.** Successful applicants will be notified by June 20.