

Biographical Note for Larry May

Larry May is a political philosopher who has worked on conceptual issues in collective and shared responsibility, as well as normative issues in international criminal law. He has also worked on professional ethics and the Just War tradition.

Education and Positions

Professor May has a BS in international affairs from Georgetown University, and an MA and Ph.D. from the New School for Social Research, where he was Hannah Arendt's last research assistant. He also has a JD in law from Washington University.

He is currently Professor of Philosophy at Washington University in St. Louis, USA; and half-time Strategic Research Professor of Social Justice at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics (Charles Sturt University) in Canberra, Australia. He has previously taught at the Universities of Connecticut and Wisconsin as well as Purdue University.

Research and Publications

May has published 21 books and more than 70 articles. His writings have been translated into French, German, Italian, Polish, Serbian, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. His early books were published by Notre Dame, MIT, Chicago, and Cornell University Presses. He has also published with MIT Press and Blackwell Publishers, among others.

Over the last five years, Larry May has published a trilogy with Cambridge University Press on the normative foundations of international criminal law. This work has been described as “groundbreaking” in having “bridged the gap between international criminal law and philosophy” (European Journal of International Law). Reviews by law theorists have been unusually strong, with the work described as “masterful” (Rain Livoja, Helsinki), and as having “stirred our conscience to action” (M. Cherif Bassiouni, DePaul). Philosophers have also praised Professor May for having a “formidable capacity for philosophical argument” (Jeff McMahan, Rutgers), as well as for having provided a “balanced and sensitive discussion” of international legal theory (Allen Buchanan, Duke). The volumes, all published since 2005, have won awards in law (from the American Society of International Law, and the International Association of Penal Law, American Section); and also in philosophy (from the American Philosophical Association, and the North American Society for Social Philosophy), as well as two awards in the field of international relations from the American Library Association. The books have also been well reviewed by military historians and military lawyers.

Professor May lectures extensively, including, in the last two years, keynote or plenary addresses at conferences in: Oxford, St. Andrews, London, Oslo, Helsinki, Krakow, Belgrade, Bielefeld, The Hague, Delft, Leiden, Montreal, Melbourne, and Sydney.

He has served on the board of directors of the American Philosophical Association and is past president of the American section of the International Society for Philosophy of Law. He has also worked on several death penalty cases, in the United States.