



STEPHEN P. STEINBERG, Ph.D.
Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Pennsylvania

Brief Professional Biography

As of 1/15/2026

A specialist in twentieth century European philosophy, Dr. Stephen P. Steinberg earned his Ph.D. from Penn in 1989 and master's degrees in philosophy from the New School for Social Research (1982) and in journalism from Columbia University (1972), after receiving his bachelor's degree "with distinction" in philosophy from the University of Michigan (1971). A Lecturer in Philosophy at Penn since 1981, and in Communication in 2006, his teaching, research, and writing interests include phenomenology, existentialism and postmodernist thought; the philosophy of religion; the philosophy of nationalism and the role of ideology in ethno-political conflict; public discourse, culture, and community; psychoanalysis; and contemporary issues in higher education. In 2014, he was the recipient of the School of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award for Affiliated Faculty in the College of Liberal and Professional Studies. He edited (with Judith Rodin) and contributed to *Public Discourse in America: Conversation and Community in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003; reissued 2011). A frequent interviewee on contemporary culture, public discourse, and civil society for both print and broadcast media, Dr. Steinberg was a featured expert commentator for *USA Today* during the 2000 presidential debates.

Dr. Steinberg served as Advisor to the President at the University of Pennsylvania from 2004-2015, with primary responsibility for high-level searches for deans and provosts and decanal reviews for reappointment. As Assistant to the President from 1990-2004, he worked closely with Penn Presidents Sheldon Hackney, Claire Fagin, Judith Rodin, and Amy Gutmann as a senior policy analyst, writer, and advisor on faculty and academic affairs, undergraduate education, campus issues, University policy development, freedom of expression, and national educational and cultural issues. From 1996 to 2004, he also served as Executive Director of the Penn National Commission on Society, Culture and Community; comprised of 50 leading scholars, political figures, and shapers of public opinion from the U.S. and abroad, the Commission explored the alleged deterioration of public culture and political discourse. In 1997-98, Dr. Steinberg directed the 21st Century Project for the Undergraduate Experience, Penn's strategic initiative to enhance undergraduate education, and served as a member of the Council of Undergraduate Deans.

Since coming to Penn as an Assistant Dean in the School of Arts and Sciences in 1978, Dr. Steinberg served in a wide variety of academic administrative capacities gaining broad experience in decanal and provostial recruitment, faculty affairs, undergraduate and doctoral education, adult and continuing education, entrepreneurial masters program development, campus cultural issues and policies, and national educational issues. He worked extensively on strategic planning, institutional restructuring, the maintenance of educational standards in undergraduate and doctoral programs, opening graduate study to adult and non-traditional students, strengthening campus community and dialogue, gender equity, racial and sexual harassment, student conduct policies, and freedom of expression in the University community.

STEPHEN P. STEINBERG

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Pennsylvania, 1989.

- Dissertation: "Aron Gurwitsch and the Interpretation of Husserl," a detailed examination of Aron Gurwitsch's interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology in the light of contemporary analytic discussions of Husserl's theory of intentionality as well as its philosophical and historical context.
- Dissertation Director: Izchak Miller.

M.A., Philosophy, New School for Social Research, 1982.

M.S., Journalism, Columbia University, 1972.

- Master's Project: "Repressive Psychiatry: The Use and Abuse of Madness in the Soviet Union."

A.B., Philosophy, *with Distinction*, University of Michigan, 1971.

- College Honors Program, 1967-71.
- Class Honors, 1971.

American Freedom Summer Institute, Washington University, Summer 1966.

- College-level study in the social sciences.

RESUME OF PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, School of Arts and Sciences, 1981-present, and Annenberg School for Communication, Spring 2006, University of Pennsylvania.

- School of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award for Affiliated Faculty in the College of Liberal and Professional Studies, 2014.
- Pre-major Faculty Advisor, College of Arts and Sciences, 1990-2019.
- Affiliated Faculty, Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, from 1998.
- Affiliated Faculty, Institute for Strategic Threat Analysis and Response, from 2002.

Advisor to the President, University of Pennsylvania, 2004-2015.

- Deputy and advisor to Penn President Amy Gutmann on academic and faculty affairs, with primary responsibility for high-level searches for deans and provosts and decanal reviews for reappointment. Varying responsibilities for academic affairs, faculty issues and liaison, presidential and institutional communications, campus issue management, and national educational and cultural issues.

Assistant to the President, University of Pennsylvania, 1990-2004.

- Senior policy analyst, writer, and advisor to Penn Presidents Sheldon Hackney, Claire Fagin, and Judith Rodin, with varying responsibilities for academic affairs, faculty issues and liaison, undergraduate education, University policy development, presidential and institutional communications, strategic planning, campus issue management, and national educational and cultural issues.

Executive Director, Penn National Commission on Society, Culture and Community, University of Pennsylvania, 1996-2004. [<http://www.upenn.edu/pnc>]

- Conceived, planned, and directed \$2.7-million Penn National Commission on Society, Culture, and Community project, funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, and comprised of 50 leading scholars, political figures, and shapers of public opinion from the U.S. and abroad, convened under the leadership of University of Pennsylvania President Judith Rodin to explore the alleged deterioration of public culture and political discourse, the fragmentation of communities, and the failures of leadership.

Director, 21st Century Project for the Undergraduate Experience, University of Pennsylvania, 1997-98.

- Member, Council of Undergraduate Deans, 1997-98.
- Directed and brought to a successful conclusion Penn's strategic initiative to enhance undergraduate education. Coordinated major innovations in undergraduate curriculum, interdisciplinary studies, student services, residential living, information technology, and inter-school collaboration. This culminated more than a decade of work with Penn's Provosts and four undergraduate schools in efforts to enhance Penn's undergraduate curriculum and educational experience.

Administrative Fellow, Offices of the President and Provost, University of Pennsylvania, 1987-90.

- Coordinator, Provost's Council on Undergraduate Education, 1987-92.
- Coordinator, Provost's Council on Undergraduate Admissions, 1987-92.
- Coordinator, Council of Undergraduate Deans, 1987-92.
- Acting Executive Assistant to the Provost, Spring 1990.
- Coordinator, Council of Graduate Deans, 1987-90.
- Coordinator, Planning Committee on Undergraduate Education, 1987-89.
- Coordinator, Planning Committee on Doctoral Education, 1987-89.

Assistant Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania, 1978-87.

- Director, Master of Arts and Professional Studies Program, 1985-87.
- Coordinator, Provost's Faculty Council on Undergraduate Education, 1986-87.
- Assistant Director for Graduate Programs and Administration, College of General Studies, 1982-87.
- Academic and Career Advisor, College of General Studies, 1978-87.

Development Officer and Adjunct Instructor of Humanities, Pratt Institute, New York, N.Y., 1976-78.**Account Associate, Bruce Porter Co., Inc., New York, N.Y., 1975-76.****Account Executive, Joseph Dermer and Associates, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1974-75.****Staff Writer, Medical Tribune, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1972-73.****Writer, United States Information Agency, Washington, D.C., Summer 1971.****News Writer, WGN-TV and Radio, Chicago, Illinois, Summer 1970.**

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Scholarly Interests

Area of Specialization:

- **Contemporary Continental Philosophy**, especially the contemporary debate over the interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology, the existentialist critique of Husserlian phenomenology expressed in the works of Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Heidegger, and related epistemological issues in postmodernist thought.

Current Teaching and Research Interests:

- **The philosophy of nationalism** in the context of modern and post-modern social, political and epistemological thought and the role of nationalist and fundamentalist ideologies in ethno-political conflict.
- **The philosophic interpretation of psychoanalysis** and the concept of intentionality in Freud, Husserl and Brentano.
- **The epistemological foundations of postmodernist thought** and their implications for contemporary American higher education, society, and culture.
- **Ideological conflict and public discourse**, with special attention to political polarization, intergroup conflict, community, and public culture.

Additional Areas of Teaching Competence:

- **19th and 20th Century Continental European Philosophy**, including Phenomenology, Existentialism, Hermeneutics, Philosophical Anthropology, and Postmodernism.
- **Philosophy of Religion**
- **Philosophy of Mind and Psychology**
- **History of Modern Philosophy**
- **Introductory and Professional Ethics**
- **Contemporary Issues in Higher Education and the Social and Cultural Role of American Higher Education Institutions**

Teaching

School of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award for Affiliated Faculty in the College of Liberal and Professional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2014.

**Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, School of Arts and Sciences,
University of Pennsylvania, 1981-present.**

- **Courses recently taught:**
Introduction to Philosophy
The Idea of Nationalism
Conflict, Ideology, and Public Discourse
Philosophy and Psychoanalysis: Freud and the Interpretation of Culture
Contemporary Continental Philosophy
Philosophy of Religion

- **Courses previously taught:**

Existentialism

Origins of Contemporary Continental Philosophy: Dilthey, Husserl, and Heidegger

Husserl and His Critics: Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty

Professional Responsibility

Philosophical Anthropology

Ethics (*Taught on-site at CIGNA Corp. headquarters, Philadelphia, PA.*)

Introduction to the Problems of Philosophy

Public Communication

- **Penn Freshman Reading Project Seminars:**

The Bacchae of Euripides (1991); *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1992); *Frankenstein* (1993); *Einstein's Dreams* (1994); *Arcadia* (1995); *A Moveable Feast* (1996); *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (1997); *Copenhagen* (1999); *The Metamorphosis* (2000); *Candide* (2001); *Things Fall Apart* (2002); *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (2005); *Free Culture* (2006).

- **Preceptorials and Proseminars:**

Community and Conversation in the University (February 2000)

Nationalism, Zionism, and Jewish Identity (April 1999)

Conflict and Conversation (November 1999)

- **Graduate Thesis Supervision:**

“‘An Inextinguishable Flame’: The Persistent Influence of Instincts and Ideology on Group Violence in the Salem Witchcraft Trials and the January 6, 2021 Attack on the U.S. Capitol,” by Emily J. Gorge, Esq., Master of Liberal Arts, University of Pennsylvania, May 2022.

“An Exploration of Inherited Wealth as a Form of ‘Privilege’”, by Nancy Ameen, Master of Liberal Arts, University of Pennsylvania, December 2017.

Aspiration and Dissonance: Readings in History, Religion, and Global Affairs (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 2017) by Jeffrey LaMonica, Master of Liberal Arts, University of Pennsylvania, December 2016.

“Re-Perceiving Gender: From Genderalized to Genderealized” by Matthew E. Pilecki, Master of Liberal Arts, University of Pennsylvania, May 2015.

“Heidegger and Religious Experience Theory” by Kevin Hughes, Master of Liberal Arts, University of Pennsylvania, August 2014.

“Nationalist Agreement Among Quebec’s Political Parties” by Paul Horos, Master of Liberal Arts, University of Pennsylvania, April 2011.

“Partition and the Crisis of Identity in Ireland” by Julianne Pitone-Watson, Master of Liberal Arts, University of Pennsylvania, May 2004.

- **Undergraduate Thesis Supervision:**

“The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe: A Concrete Expression of the German Nation’s Commitment to the International Human Rights Regime” by Sheri Halpern, Senior Honors Thesis in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, University of Pennsylvania, April 2006.

Lecturer, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 2006.

- Public Communication (*Taught Spring 2006.*)

Adjunct Instructor of Humanities, Pratt Institute, 1977-78.

- With support of the Mellon Foundation Programs in the Humanities, developed and taught a two-semester course on "Value Judgments in the Professions," examining the value conflicts and choices which face working professionals and students in engineering, architecture, the fine arts, art education, industrial design and other fields.

Publications

[*Public Discourse in America: Conversation and Community in the Twenty-First Century*](#), co-editor with Judith Rodin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003; reissued 2011).

"The Centrality of Public Discourse." In *Public Discourse in America: Conversation and Community in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Judith Rodin and Stephen P. Steinberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003; reissued 2011).

"Creating Community in Cyberspace: Criteria for a Discourse Technology Project." In *Public Discourse in America: Conversation and Community in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Judith Rodin and Stephen P. Steinberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003; reissued 2011).

"Incivility and Public Discourse." Co-author with Judith Rodin. In *Public Discourse in America: Conversation and Community in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Judith Rodin and Stephen P. Steinberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003; reissued 2011).

"The Origins of Nationalism: Marxism and Zionism in the Writings of Ber Borochov," *Zionist Ideas*, No. 10, Winter 1984.

Theses

"Aron Gurwitsch and the Interpretation of Husserl," doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1989.

"Repressive Psychiatry: The Use and Abuse of Madness in the Soviet Union," master's project, Columbia University, 1972.

Presentations

"Our Confused Ideas about Nationalism," an invited lecture at The Hill at Whitemarsh, Lafayette Hill, PA, September 8, 2018.

"Civil Society and Civil Discourse in American Democracy," a presentation to visiting Russian parliamentarians from the Moscow School of Political Studies, National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, PA, March 26, 2004.

"On Wanting to be Civic," a presentation to a faculty seminar on The Future of Citizenship, University of Pennsylvania, March 21, 2002.

"The Philosophy of Nationalism," an invited presentation to the Summer Postdoctoral Institute, Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, University of Pennsylvania, August 3, 2001.

“Nationalism and Zionism,” invited presentation to student conference, Penn Hillel, University of Pennsylvania, February 1, 1998.

“Towards a 21st Century Zionism,” invited presentation to the Second Pan-American Conference of the Seminars on Zionist Thought, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1995.

“On Multiculturalism and Zionism,” presentation to the Continuing Seminar on Zionist Thought, Philadelphia, PA, March 1994.

“The Psychology of Racism, Fundamentalism and Nationalism,” presentation to the Continuing Seminar on Zionist Thought, Philadelphia, PA, May 1993.

“Zionism and Nationalism: A Philosophical Prolegomenon to Zionist Theory,” presentation to the Continuing Seminar on Zionist Thought, Philadelphia, PA, May 1990.

“The Historical and Phenomenological Foundations of Exceptionalism: The Centrality of the Galut Experience to Contemporary Zionism and Jewish Identity,” presentation at the North American Conference of the Continuing Seminars on Zionist Thought, New York, N.Y., January 1985.

“The Origins of Nationalism: Marxism and Zionism in the Writings of Ber Borochov,” paper presented to the Continuing Seminar on Zionist Thought, Philadelphia, PA, May 1984.

“Psychoanalysis, Science and Philosophical Anthropology,” presentation at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, May 1982.

Other Activities

Member, Penn-PCOP (Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia) Collaboration Liaison Committee, 2014-present.

Member, Editorial and Reviewers’ Board, *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts*, Athens Institute for Education and Research, 2014-present.

Member, Philosophy Research Unit, Athens Institute for Education and Research, 2013-present.

Invited Participant, “The Future of Citizenship: A Cross-Campus Faculty Conversation,” an interdisciplinary faculty seminar at the University of Pennsylvania, Spring 2002

Affiliated Faculty Member, Institute for Strategic Threat Analysis and Response, from 2002.

Affiliated Faculty Member and Faculty Seminar Participant, Solomon Asch Center for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, from 1998.

Member, Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism, 1999-present.

Invited Participant, “Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes and Solutions,” an international scholarly conference, hosted by INCORE, Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity, University of Ulster, Derry, Northern Ireland, June-July 1998.

Academic Observer, World Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, Israel, December 1997.

Invited Participant, Second Pan-American Conference of the Seminars on Zionist Thought, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1995.

Invited Participant, Pan American Conference of the Seminars on Zionist Thought, Caracas, Venezuela, December 1989.

Member, Metropolitan Philosophy of Religion Seminar, Philadelphia, PA, 1988-1992.

Member, Advisory Board, Master of Arts and Professional Studies Program, University of Pennsylvania, 1987-1991.

Chairman, Faculty Planning Committee, Conference on "The Contemporary Jew: Power and Vulnerability," Delaware Valley Faculty Exchange and the Commission for Higher Education in Israel, Philadelphia, PA, 1987-88.

Invited participant, North American Conference of the Seminars on Zionist Thought, New York, NY, January 1985.

Member, Continuing Seminar on Zionist Thought, Philadelphia, PA, 1983-1999.

- Steering Committee Member, 1984-1999.

Member, Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, from 1978.

American Philosophical Association

- Member, from 1977.
- Member, N.E.H. Challenge Grant Fund Drive Committee, 1981-86.