

Michael Holdsworth

Research Fellow

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About

Michael is a Research Fellow at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues in the School of Education. He is a member of the Centre's research team and brings an expertise in law and legal ethics, particularly to the 'Virtues, Values and Decision-Making in Three Professions in the UK in the 21st Century' research project. This project focuses on teachers, medical and law students at the beginning of their degree, those completing the vocational stage of their training and established professionals. It seeks to investigate their understanding of professional ethics and its relationship with character and virtue. Michael previously led the LL.M course at Oxford Brookes, and tutored on the Legal Practice Course. Michael is a qualified lawyer with experience of working in private practice as well as in academia. He is currently a doctoral student at the University of Manchester where he is undertaking comparative research into the relationship between constitutional law and religion in three European countries.

Qualifications

- Currently a doctoral student and the University of Manchester: "In twenty-first century Europe, do constitutional democracies require co-operation or strict separation between public authorities and religious bodies?"
- LL.M (Oxford Brookes): "Faith-based supplementary jurisdictions in England and the established status of the Church of England."
- Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice
- Graduate Diploma in Law
- MA (Oxon): Theology

Biography

Michael has joined the Jubilee Centre in the School of Education from Oxford Brookes University, where he was a Senior Lecturer in the School of Law. He is a member of the Centre's research team and will bring an expertise in law and legal ethics, particularly to the 'Virtues, Values and Decision-Making in Three Professions in the UK in the 21st Century' research project. This project focuses on teachers, medical and law students at the beginning of their degree, those completing the vocational stage of their training and established professionals. It seeks to investigate their understanding of professional ethics and its relationship with character and virtue.

Michael previously led the LL.M course at Oxford Brookes, where he undertook research into law and religion. He supervised LL.M dissertations and contributed to the Advanced Legal Research Methodology module. He also taught Professional Conduct, Equity Finance and Taxation Law on the Legal Practice Course. Michael is a qualified lawyer with experience of working in private practice at Burges Salmon in Bristol where he specialised in corporate finance. He is currently a doctoral student at the University of Manchester where he is undertaking comparative research into the relationship between constitutional law and religion in three European countries. His supervisors are Professor Rodney Brazier and Dr. Javier Garcia Oliva.

Teaching

Michael teaches the 'Children as Citizens' module on the [BA \(Hons\) Education \(/undergraduate/courses/edu/ba-education.aspx\)](http://www.bham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/edu/ba-education.aspx) course.

Research

Jubilee Centre: Virtues and Values in Three Professions in the UK in the 21st Century

This project is designed to deepen our understanding of the place of virtues and values in the initial education, training and subsequent professional practice in three professions. Focused on doctors, lawyers and teachers, we are working with entrants to the professions (i.e. students and trainees) and their educators, and those who have been in practice for five years or more.

With entrants, we are investigating how the initial professional education of the three groups is informed by conceptions of the virtues, and how this initial education influences entrants' values and ethical beliefs. With their educators, we are exploring how and to what extent formal and informal curricula and assessment are explicitly informed and underpinned by concepts of professional virtues and values. With experienced practitioners, we are examining the virtues they identify as important to their profession and how these influence their everyday practice. An important aspect of the enquiry is the extent to which professionals rely – and are required to rely – upon codes of practice and guidelines in making decisions and how these interact with their own beliefs and conceptions of professional and personal virtues. Recognising that professionals work within institutional, regulatory and disciplinary frameworks, we are exploring how these restrict and/or allow space for individual agency.

During the course of this three year project the research team hope to gain some understanding of how conceptions of virtue and their instantiation change from entry to graduation for young professionals and, over time, for more experienced practitioners. In this way we hope to extend understanding of factors that influence changing ethical beliefs and behaviour.

Publications

J. Arthur and M. Holdsworth (2012) The European Court of Human Rights, Secular Education and Public Schooling, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60(2), pp 129-149. DOI: [10.1080/00071005.2012.661402](https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2012.661402) (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2012.661402>)

