Robert Michels
Curriculum Vitae

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Employment

2022-	FCT Assistant Researcher, LanCog, Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisbon
2021-2022	Temporary Lecturer (part-time, replacing Prof. Vera Hoffmann-Kolss), Institute of Philosophy, University of Bern
2019-2021	Collaborator, SNSF-funded research project 'Identity in Cognitive Science, Quantum Mechanics, and Metaphysics', Università della Svizzera italiana
2018-2020	Temporary lecturer (part-time, replacing Prof. Fabrice Correia), Institute of philosophy, University of Neuchâtel (fall semester 2018, spring and fall semesters 2019, spring semester 2020) and Department of philosophy, University of Geneva (spring and fall semesters 2019)
2014-2017	Postdoc, SNSF-funded research project 'Indeterminacy and Formal Concepts', Department of Philosophy, University of Geneva
2010-2014	Scientific collaborator, Department of Philosophy, University of Geneva
2006-09	Teaching assistant, Department of Philosophy, University of Constance

Education

2010-2013	**PhD in philosophy**, *University of Geneva*, Thesis title: *Metaphysical Modality and Essentiality*, supervised by Prof. Kevin Mulligan, jury-members: Profs. Fabrice Correia, Fraser MacBride, Peter Simons, Wolfgang Spohn Defended on 16 December 2013
2008-10	PhD-student, University of Constance, supervised by Prof. Wolfgang Spohn
2008	**MA in philosophy**, *University of Constance, supervised by Prof. Wolfgang Spohn and Prof. Tobias Rosefeld*
2005	**BA in pedagogics and art history**, *University of Karlsruhe (TH)*

Publications

Journal articles (peer-reviewed)

	Laws of Nature as Results of a Trade-Off – Rethinking the Humean trade-off conception (co-authored with Niels Linnemann) – forthcoming in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, `https://philpapers.org/rec/LINLON` (preprint)
2025	Humansplaining: Is it a Thing? Is it bad? (co-authored with Sanna Hirvonen) – forthcoming in *AI & Society* (Curmudgeon Corner), `https://rdcu.be/eidX2`
	Are all laws of nature created equal? Meta-laws versus more necessary laws (co-authored with Salim Hirèche, Niels Linnemann) – *Erkenntnis* 90(3): 1041-1059; `https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-023-00739-7`

Graded Qualities (co-authored with Claudio Calosi) – *Synthese* 205:116 `https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-024-04848-w`

2024 Plural Metaphysical Supervaluationism (co-authored with Cristian Mariani, Guiliano Torrengo) – *Inquiry* 67(6): 2005–2042; `https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2021.1982404`

2021 The Strong Arm of the Law. A Unified Account of Necessary and Contingent Laws of Nature (co-authored with Salim Hirèche, Niels Linnemann, Lisa Vogt) – *Synthese* 199: 10211–10252; `https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-021-03243-z`

The Modal Status of the Laws of Nature. Tahko's Hybrid View and the Kinematical/Dynamical Distinction (co-authored with Salim Hirèche, Niels Linnemann, Lisa Vogt) – *The European Journal for Philosophy of Science* 11(25); `https://doi.org/10.1007/s13194-020-00335-4`

2020 Husserlian Eidetic Variation and Objectual Understanding as a Basis for an Epistemology of Essence – *Logos & Episteme* XI(3): 333-353; `http://logos-and-episteme.acadiasi.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/michels.XI_.3.2020.pdf`

2019 On How (Not) to Define Modality in Terms of Essence – *Philosophical Studies*, 176(4): 1015–1033; `http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11098-018-1040-8`

The Limits of Non-Standard Contingency – *Philosophical Studies* 176(2): 533–558; `http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11098-017-1027-x`

2018 Essential Truths and Their Truth-Grounds – *Ergo* 5(30) 790–815; `http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0005.030`

Cross-World Comparatives for Modal Realists – *Organon F* (3): 368–391; `http://www.klemens.sav.sk/fiusav/organon/organon_counter.php?year=2018&number=3&pages=368-391`

2012 Soames's Argument 1 Against Strong Two-Dimensionalism – *Philosophical Studies* 161(3): 403–420; `http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11098-011-9746-x`

Contributions to special issues and collected volumes

Forthcoming Moritz Geiger's Notion of Dynamic Essence – a Challenge for the Contemporary 'Platonic' Conception of Essence? – In: special issue of *Disputatio* with papers from the 2024 LanCog Summer Metaphysics Workshop, edited by Ned Markosian; `https://philpapers.org/rec/MICMGN`

Introduction: The Formalization of Arguments – a rough overview – In: special issue of *dialectica* on the formalization of arguments; `https://dialectica.philosophie.ch/dialectica/article/view/12/12`

2024 Contemporary History of Essence (Analytic Tradition) – in: Koslicki, K. & Raven, M. (Eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Essence in Philosophy.* Routledge, pp. 84–99; `https://philpapers.org/rec/MICCAT-12`

2020 Correct Conceivability and its Role in the Epistemology of Modality – in: Declos, A. & Guillon, J. (Eds.): *Principes Métaphysiques.* Paris : Collège de France; `https://books.openedition.org/cdf/8079`

Edited special issue

Forthcoming   Special issue of *dialectica* on the formalization of arguments – featuring papers by Hanoch Ben-Yami, Roy T. Cook, Bogdan Dicher, Vladan Djordjevic, Joongol Kim, Friedrich Reinmuth, and Gil Sagi and an introduction by myself; all contained papers available online at `https://dialectica.philosophie.ch/dialectica/issue/view/6`

Reviews

2018   Review of David Wiggins, *Continuants: Their Activity, Their Being, and Their Identity*, Oxford University Press, 2016, *dialectica*, Volume 72, Issue 2, 325–328; `http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1746-8361.12233`

2008   Conference report: With Fritz, Peter; Ramanava, Maryia; Zinke, Alexandra: First Formal Epistemology Festival, 28–30 July. In: *The Reasoner*, Volume 2, Number 9 - September 2008, pp. 13–14

Presentations

Research presentations (selection)

2025   Opposite Properties – *Recent Works in Philosophical Logic*, Ca'Foscari University, Venice

2024   Laws of nature as results of a trade-off – Rethinking the Humean trade-off conception (presenter, with Niels Linnemann) – *9th Society for the Metaphysics of Science Conference*, online (peer-reviewed)

The End of Human Inquiry – *Argument Rodizio*, Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisbon

Dynamic Essence – *The 2024 LanCog Summer Metaphysics Workshop – Theme: Time*, Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisbon

Ways of Being Wise – Research Colloquium of the Chair of Theoretical Philosophy, Goethe University Frankfurt

A Partial Defence of the Property View of Predicates – *eidos seminar*, University of Geneva

Graded Qualities (with Claudio Calosi) – 1st Parma Workshop in Analytic and Scientific Metaphysics, University of Parma (peer-reviewed) & Workshop at the Chair of Theoretical Philosophy, Goethe University, Frankfurt/Main & July Workshop on Quantities, University of Birmingham

2023   Can AI Help Humeans? The Laws of Nature Debate in Light of Automated Scientific Discovery (presenter, with Niels Linnemann) – *Seminar Series in Analytic Philosophy*, Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisbon

Ways of Being Wise Part II: Ultimate Wisdom – *eidos seminar*, University of Geneva

Dynamic Essence – *Summerschool with Kit Fine*, Ligerz

Graded Properties, Fuzzy Vagueness, and Metaphysical Indeterminacy – *Workshop: Vagueness and Indeterminacy*, USI, Lugano

Graded Properties (presenter, with C. Calosi) – *Seminar Series in Analytic Philosophy*, Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisboa

Ways of Being Wise – *eidos seminar*, University of Geneva

2022 Graded Properties (presenter, with C. Calosi, A. Corti) – *Degrees in Epistemology and Beyond*, University of Zürich

Permissive Dispositionalism – *Modalities in Science: Metaphysical Perspectives*, University of Geneva

Symposium: 'Are all Laws of Physics Created Equal?' (two presentations with S. Hirèche, N. Linnemann, L. Vogt) – *GWP.2022 – The Fourth International Conference of the German Society for Philosophy of Science*, TU Berlin (peer-reviewed)

2021 One Dimensional versus Two-Dimensional Zombies – *Things and Their Explanatory Power – Essence, Grounding, and Causation*, University of Bern

Lewis's counterpart theory and the Aufbau – *Society for the Study of the History of Analytical Philosophy*, online conference hosted by the University of Vienna (peer-reviewed)

Essence in 20th Century Analytic Philosophy – *Handbook of Essence workshop*, online workshop hosted by the University of Neuchâtel

2020 Graded Properties (presenter, with C. Calosi, A. Corti) – *Properties, Relations, and Relational States*, USI Lugano

Lewis's counterpart theory and the Aufbau – *ECAP 10*, online conference hosted by Utrecht University (peer-reviewed)

The modal status of the laws of nature. Tahko's hybrid view and the kinematical/dynamical distinction (with S. Hirèche, N. Linnemann, L. Vogt) – *ECAP 10*, online conference hosted by Utrecht University (peer-reviewed) & Reading group of the MeTaScience project, University of Bristol [also accepted for the *84th Annual Conference of the Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft and DPG Spring Meeting, Arbeitsgruppe Philosophie der Physik*, Bonn (peer-reviewed) which was *cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak*]

2019 A Minimal Characterization of Essence – *Workshop of the Groupe d'Etudes en Métaphysique* at the Collège de France, Paris

Metaphysical Necessity and Logical Closure – *Workshop of the Sources of Necessity-project*, University of Tübingen

Plural Metaphysical Supervaluationism (with C. Mariani (presenter), G. Torrengo) – *Quantum Indeterminacy Workshop*, Dartmouth College (peer reviewed)

Defining Essentiality – *Quodlibeta*, University of Geneva

2018 On Objectual Understanding and Essence – *Colloque de recherches de l'institut de philosophie*, University of Neuchâtel

Multidimensional Vagueness: A Supervaluational Approach – *GAP.10*, Cologne (peer-reviewed)

Against Quantum Mechanics Based Objections to Metaphysical Supervaluationism (with C. Mariani, G. Torrengo) – *4th Society for the Metaphysics of Science Conference*, Milan (peer-reviewed)

2017   Multi-Dimensional Vagueness – Invited talk at the Philosophy Department, Saarland University

Essentialism and Contingent Existence Claims – *3rd Society for the Metaphysics of Science Conference*, New York (peer-reviewed)

An Existential Problem for Metaphysical Necessity – *Colloque de recherches de l'institut de philosophie*, University of Neuchâtel

Multi-Dimensional Vagueness and Formal Concepts – *The Future of Swiss Philosophy* workshop, Ligerz

Conceivability and Essence – *Workshop of the Groupe d'Etudes en Métaphysique* at the Collège de France, Paris & *ECAP 9*, Munich (peer-reviewed)

Cross-World Comparatives for Modal Realists – *Issues on the (Im)Possible V*, Bratislava (peer-reviewed)

The Formalization of Arguments – *Making it (too?) Precise*, Geneva

2016   Two-Dimensional Semantics and Zombies – *Phileas* talk, University of Geneva

Is 'Metaphysical Necessity' Ambiguous? – *Issues on the (Im)Possible IV*, Bratislava (peer-reviewed)

Notwendigkeit und Unbestimmtheit [Necessity and Indeterminacy] – Early Lunch Philosophy, University of Constance

Rosen's Correct-Conceivability-Based Argument for Contingentism – *Fifth Italian Conference in Analytic Ontology*, Padua (peer-reviewed)

2015   One-Dimensional versus Two-Dimensional Zombies – *Toward a Science of Consciousness 2015*, Helsinki (peer-reviewed) & *GAP.9*, Osnabrück (peer-reviewed)

An Argument Against the Claim that Grounding is Minimal – *Truth and Grounds*, Ascona (peer-reviewed)

2014   Epistemic Rigidity and the Zombie Argument – *Workshop with David Chalmers*, Fribourg

2013   Fine on Necessity – *Fine Conference*, Varano Borghi (peer-reviewed)

2012   Can Conceptual Possibilities Be Metaphysically Impossible? – *GAP.8*, Constance (peer-reviewed) & *10th BPPA Masterclass: Modality and the A Priori / A Posteriori Distinction*, Institute of Philosophy, London & *Graduate Seminar in Theoretical Philosophy*, Stockholm University

Necessity and Apriority in Two-Dimensional Semantics – *Fourth Workshop: What Did We Learn From Two-Dimensionalism, 2012 metaphysics graduate school*, Geneva

2011   Worldly Indeterminacy and Modality – *ECAP7*, Milan (peer-reviewed) & *PETAF Midterm Conference*, Aberdeen

"Against an Argument Against the Indexicality of 'Actually'" – *Bonn Graduate Conference*, Bonn (peer-reviewed)

Two Kinds of 'Actually'-Operators – *PETAF Semantics Workshop*, Centre Culturel International de Cerisy-la-Salle

2010 Soames's Critique of Two-Dimensional Semantics – *MMA-Symposium, Research Workshop with Scott Soames*, Cologne (peer-reviewed)

2009 Soames's Critique of Two-Dimensional Semantics – *GAP.7*, Bremen (peer-reviewed)

Comments

2018 Comments on Matt Leonard's 'On the Contingency and Vagueness of Where I am' – *4th Society for the Metaphysics of Science conference*, Milan

2017 Comments on Stephan Leuenberger's 'Inscrutable Cross-Family Sentences' – *Metaphysics sans phrase. 10 years of eidos - the centre for metaphysics*, Geneva

Comments on Matthew Collier's 'The Representational Deficiencies of Hybrid Modal Realism' – *Issues on the (Im)Possible V*, Bratislava

2016 Comments on Frances Heather Fairbairn's 'The Problem of Advanced Modalizing' – *Issues on the (Im)Possible IV*, Bratislava

2015 Comments on Johannes Korbmacher's 'Towards Axiomatic Theories of Ground' – GAP.9 satellite-workshop *Logical and Metaphysical Perspectives on Grounding*, Osnabrück

2010 Comments on Shane Babcock's 'An Argument Against Actualist Accounts of Possible Worlds as Truthmakers for Modal Claims' – *MMA-Symposium, Graduate Conference*, Cologne

Comments on Kyle Stanford's 'Scientific Realism: When Should We Worry?' – *Monthly Monday Meeting*, Constance

Teaching experience

As an instructor

2024 *Epistemic Opacity in Machine Learning Models*, module of the course *Epistemology and Philosophy of Science* (with A. Silva Graça, A. Oldofredi) (in English), graduate level seminar, University of Lisbon, 1st semester 2024/25

2021 *Social Ontology* (in German), undergraduate level seminar, University of Bern

Laws of Nature (in German), graduate level seminar, University of Bern

2020 (with C. Calosi) *Science meets ontology* (in English), graduate level seminar, University of Geneva

Introduction to predicate logic (in French), undergraduate lecture, University of Neuchâtel

2019 *Introduction to propositional logic* (in French), undergraduate lecture, University of Neuchâtel

Indeterminacy (in English), graduate seminar, University of Geneva

Introduction to predicate logic (in French), undergraduate level lecture, University of Neuchâtel

Truth-Relativism, graduate-level seminar (in English), University of Geneva

2018 *Introduction to propositional logic* (in French), undergraduate level lecture, University of Neuchâtel

Wittgenstein – Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (in French), undergraduate level seminar, University of Neuchâtel

2017 *Introduction to Metaphysics* (in French), undergraduate level seminar, University of Neuchâtel)

2016 *Carnap and Metaphysics* (in French), graduate level seminar, University of Geneva

(with T. Rechnitzer, R. Reick, M. Rudolph) *Philosophy and Society* (in German, interdisciplinary undergraduate-level seminar, University of Karlsruhe (KIT))

(with A. Frischhut, K. Mulligan) *On Existence, Quantification, and Modes of Being* (in English), graduate-level seminar, University of Geneva

2015 *Modality* (in English), graduate-level seminar, University of Geneva

2014 (with M. Dusseldorp, R. Reick, M. Rudolph) *The Role of Scientific Knowledge in Society* (in German, German title: *Wissen als Gut*), interdisciplinary undergraduate- and graduate-level seminar, University of Karlsruhe (KIT)

(with K. Mulligan) *Formal Concepts* (in French), graduate-level seminar, University of Geneva

Teaching as part of graduate schools

2023 *Fine (and others) on Essence and Modality* (in English) – Introductory presentation and discussion, CUSO Summerschool with Kit Fine, Ligerz

2017 *The Necessity of Identity* (in English) – Introductory presentation and discussion, First eidos Winterschool in Metaphysics, Neuchâtel

Graduate supervision

2023- Mariana Seabra – MA, University of Lisbon, main supervisor, subjects: philosophy of science, philosophy of AI

As a teaching assistant

2009 *Wittgenstein – Rule-Following and Private Language* (in German, University of Constance) – Grading (homework assignments and take-home exam).

2008-9 *Introduction to the Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (in German, University of Constance) – Grading (homework assignments and take-home exam).

2007-8 *Introduction to the Philosophy of Language* (in German, University of Constance) – Tutorials.

2007 *Introduction to Epistemology* (in German, University of Constance) – Tutorials, Grading (homework assignments and written examination).

2006-7 *Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking* (in German, University of Constance) – Tutorials, Grading (homework assignments and written examination).

Fundraising for & organization of research projects

2025-26 Research project 'Indeterminacy in Science' (Centre of Philosophy, University of Lisbon) funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) through their PeX funding programme; `https://doi.org/10.54499/2023.15136.PEX`

2019-21	(with Kevin Mulligan and Jonas Waechter) Research project 'Identity in Cognitive Science, Quantum Mechanics, and Metaphysics' (Università della Svizzera italiana, principal investigator and applicant: Kevin Mulligan) funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)
2014-17	(with Kevin Mulligan) Research project 'Indeterminacy and Formal Concepts' (University of Geneva, principal investigator and applicant: Kevin Mulligan) funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

Fundraising for & organization of academic events

Upcoming	1st workshop of the project 'Indeterminacy in Science', University of Lisbon
	Organization of the Satellite Workshop 'New Work on Metaphysical Indeterminacy', GAP.12, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, `https://gap12.de/programme.html`
2017-2021	Organization of the weekly *eidos* research seminar (with Claudio Calosi, and in autumn semester 2021 with Martin Galzier), Universities of Geneva and Neuchâtel (spring semester 2017) and University of Geneva (autumn semester 2017-autumn semester 2021)
2021	Organization and fundraising for the workshop 'Identity in Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science' – (with Jonas Waechter): June 6 2021, online, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) – website: `https://philevents.org/event/show/90670`
2019	Organization and fundraising for a Workshop on Identity – (with Jonas Waechter): March 7-8 2020, Università della Svizzera italiana, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) – website: `https://philevents.org/event/show/80930` – **Cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak**
2017	Organization of the conference 'Metaphysics sans phrase. 10 years of eidos – the centre for metaphysics' (with Claudio Calosi, Fabrice Correia, Alexander Skiles): 23-24 November 2017, University of Geneva – website: `http://eidoscentre.org/index.php?cID=168`
	Organization and fundraising for the workshop 'Making it (too?) precise – Ordinary Reasoning, Formalization, and Logical Modeling' (with Dominik Aeschbacher and Maria Scarpati): 7-8 July 2017, University of Geneva, funded by the Conférence universitaire de Suisse occidentale (CUSO) and the University of Geneva – website: `https://makingit2precise.weebly.com/`
2016	Organization and fundraising for the workshop 'Kinds of Indeterminacy' (with Kevin Mulligan): 11-12 November 2016, University of Geneva, funded by the University of Geneva – website: `https://kindsofindeterminacy.weebly.com/`

Refereeing & other editorial work ('*' indicates multiple reviews)

Former member of the editorial committee of *dialectica* (2010-2020)

Journal & book refereeing: *Acta Analytica, Analysis*, Cambridge Elements Series, Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Ergo*, Erkenntnis*, European Journal for Philosophy of Science, Kriterion, Inquiry, Journal of Philosophy, Mind*, Philosophia Scientiae, Philosophical Papers, Philosophical Studies*, Problemos, Synthese*, Thought**

Conference refereeing: *Lake Geneva Graduate Conference* (2016, 2019*), *1st eidos Winter School in metaphysics* (2016*), *Conference on Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism – 3rd Annual Meeting of the Canadian Metaphysics Collaborative* (2019), *GAP.12 – 12th international congress of the German Society for Analytic Philosophy* (2025)

Scholarships & individual grants

2022-28   Grant through the CEEC IND4ed funding programme of the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) for the research project *Understanding the Nature of Indeterminacy* ((https://doi.org/10.54499/2021.03171.CEECIND/CP1702/CT0015))

2010-13   'Early Stage Researcher' within the EU-funded FP7 Marie Curie Initial Training Network "PETAF" (Perspectival Truth and Facts)

2009   SUN Scholarship, CEU Summer University, Budapest

2008-10   PhD research grant of the University of Constance (Stipendium nach Landesgraduiertenförderungsgesetz)

Academic visits & summer schools

2012   Visiting student, Stockholm University, supervised by Peter Pagin (3 months)

Attended the 10th BPPA Masterclass: 'Modality and the A Priori / A Posteriori Distinction' (instructor: Timothy Williamson), Institute of Philosophy, London

2011   Visiting student, Birkbeck, University of London, supervised by Keith Hossack (2 months)

2010   Visiting student, Emmy Noether research group *Understanding and the A Priori*, University of Cologne, supervised by Magdalena and Brendan Balcerak Jackson (2 months,)

2009   Attended the summer school 'Conditionals: Philosophical and Linguistic Issues', CEU Summer University, Budapest

Other academic activities

2024   Organisation of a professionalization workshop for graduate students focusing on publishing in international peer-reviewed philosophy journals, University of Lisbon

2023   Organisation of a reading group on mereology, University of Lisbon

2019   (with Jonas Waechter) Organisation of a reading group on personal identity open to researchers, students, and the interested public at the University of Geneva

2016	In cooperation with Phileas, the association of philosophy students of the University of Geneva: organisation of a reading group on Frege for students
2009	Member of a job committee for a professorship in theoretical philosophy (student representative), University of Constance

Knowledge of languages

German	native language
English	spoken: fluent, written: fluent
French	spoken: fluent, written: advanced
Russian	spoken: basic
Portuguese	spoken: beginner