

Robert Michels

Curriculum Vitae

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Employment

- 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

Research articles

- Forthcoming Correct Conceivability and its Role in the Epistemology of Modality – in: Declos, A. & Guillon, J. (Eds.): *Principes Métaphysiques*. Paris : Collège de France.
- 2019 On How (Not) to Define Modality in Terms of Essence – *Philosophical Studies*, Volume 176, Issue 4, pp. 1015–1033; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11098-018-1040-8>
The Limits of Non-Standard Contingency – *Philosophical Studies*, Volume 176, Issue 2, pp. 533–558; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11098-017-1027-x>
- 2018 Essential Truths and Their Truth-Grounds – *Ergo*, Volume 5, Number 30, pp. 790–815; <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0005.030>

Cross-World Comparatives for Modal Realists – *Organon F*, Volume 25, Issue 3, pp. 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*, Volume 161, Issue 3, pp. 403–420; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11098-011-9746-x>

Edited special issue

Forthcoming Editor of a special issue of *dialectica* on the formalization of arguments – to appear in spring 2020

Other publication

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)

Upcoming Lewis’s counterpart theory and the Aufbau – *Society for the Study of the History of Analytical Philosophy*, Vienna (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) – *84th Annual Conference of the Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft and DPG Spring Meeting, Arbeitsgruppe Philosophie der Physik*, Bonn (peer-reviewed) – **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. Torrenço) – *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. Torrenço) – *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

2020 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

The Necessity of Identity (in English) – 90 minute teaching session as part of the *First eidos Winterschool in Metaphysics*, Neuchâtel

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

- (with T. Rechner, 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

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).

Scholarships & individual grants

- 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)

Fundraising for & organization of research projects

- 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) – Grant for two half-time postdoc-positions (25 and 29 months) at the Università della Svizzera italiana
- 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) – Grant for one full-time postdoc-position at the University of Geneva

Fundraising for & organization of academic events

- 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 weekly eidos seminar (with Claudio Calosi), Universities of Geneva and Neuchâtel (spring semester 2017) and University of Geneva (autumn semester 2017-)
- 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/>

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

Refereeing & other editorial work (* indicates multiple reviews)

Member of the editorial committee of *dialectica* (since 2010)

Journal refereeing: *Acta Analytica*, *Analysis**, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy**, *Ergo*, *Erkenntnis**, *Kriterion*, *Mind**, *Philosophia Scientiae*, *Philosophical Papers*, *Philosophical Studies*, *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)

Other academic activities

- 2019 (with Jonas Waechter) Organisation of a reading group on personal identity open to researchers and students 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