

Robert Michels

Curriculum Vitae

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Employment

- 2022- FCT Assistant Researcher, LanCog Group, CFUL, 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)

- Forthcoming Are all laws of nature created equal? Meta-laws versus more necessary laws (co-authored with Salim Hirèche, Niels Linnemann) – forthcoming in *Erkenntnis*; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-023-00739-7>
Plural Metaphysical Supervenience (co-authored with Cristian Mariani, Guiliano Torrengo) – forthcoming in *Inquiry*; <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*. Volume 199, pp. 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*, Volume 11, Article nr. 25; <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13194-020-00335-4>
- 2020 Husserlian Eidetic Variation and Objectual Understanding as a Basis for an Epistemology of Essence – *Logos & Episteme*, Volume XI, Issue 3, pp. 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*, 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>

Invited articles

- Forthcoming Contemporary History of Essence (Analytic Tradition) – in: Koslicki, K. & Raven, M. (Eds.): *Handbook of Essence*. Routledge
- Introduction: The Formalization of Arguments – a rough overview – In: special issue of *dialectica* on the formalization of arguments; <https://doi.org/10.48106/dial.v74.i2.01>
- 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 – to appear in 2023, featuring papers by Hanoch Ben-Yami, Roy T. Cook, Bogdan Dicher, Vladan Djordjevic, Joongol Kim, Friedrich Reinmuth, and Gil Sagi and an introduction, 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)

- 2023 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*, CFUL, University of Lisboa
 Ways of Being Wise – *eidōs 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
- 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. 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 Korbmayer’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

- 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

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).

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

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

- 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://eidocentre.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)

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**, *Kriterion*, *Inquiry*, *Journal of Philosophy*, *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

- 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 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