

Michael J. Olson

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Education

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| Villanova University | Ph.D., Philosophy, 2013 |
| Villanova University | M.A., Philosophy, 2006 |
| Grinnell College | B.A., Philosophy and Mathematics, 2003 |

Academic Appointments

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| Marquette University, <i>Visiting Assistant Professor</i> | 2018 - |
| Macquarie University, <i>Honorary Research Fellow</i> | 2018 - |
| Macquarie University, <i>Lecturer</i> | 2014 - 2018 |
| Loyola University Chicago, <i>Lecturer</i> | 2013 - 2014 |

Research & Teaching

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Kant • Early Modern Philosophy • History of Philosophy of Science

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Aesthetics • Political Philosophy • Ethics

Publications

BOOK

under
contract

Michael J. Olson and Jennifer Mensch (eds.), *Key Texts in Early German Life Science Debates: Theories of Generation and Race, 1750-1820* (London: Bloomsbury).

ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

- forthcoming “Early Modern Theories of the Senses” and “Early Modern Conceptions of Embodiment.” *Encyclopedia of Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences*. Eds. Dana Jalobeanu and Charles T. Wolfe (Springer).
- forthcoming Michael J. Olson, “Kant on the Feeling of Health.” *Kant and the Feeling of Life: Beauty and Nature in the Critique of Judgment*. Ed. Jennifer Mensch (Albany, NY: SUNY Press).
- 2019 Michael J. Olson and Jean-Philippe Deranty, “The Work of Art in the Age of its Digital Distribution.” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 24, no. 5 (2019), 104-123.
- 2019 Michael J. Olson, “Kant on the Unity of the Activity of Thinking.” *Akten des 12. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses: Natur und Freiheit*. Eds. Violetta L. Waibel und Margit Ruffing (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2019), vol. 2, 1099-1108.
- 2018 Michael J. Olson, “On the Significance of the Copernican Revolution: Transcendental Philosophy and the Object of Metaphysics.” *Con-Textos Kantianos*, no. 7 (2018), 89-127.
- 2018 Michael J. Olson, “Literature in the German Science of the Soul: Johann Gottlob Krüger’s *Dreams*.” *History of European Ideas*, vol. 44, no. 5 (2018), 528-542.
- 2016 Michael J. Olson, “Kant on Anatomy and the Status of the Life Sciences.” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, vol. 58 (2016), 77-84.
- 2015 Michael J. Olson, “The Camera Obscura and the Soul: On a Tension between the Mechanics of Sensation and the Metaphysics of the Soul.” *Intellectual History Review*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2015), 279-291.
- Reprinted in Anik Waldow (ed.), *Sensibility in the Early Modern Era: From Living Machines to Affective Morality* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 25-37.
- 2013 Michael J. Olson, “A Materialist Transcendental: On the Ontology of *Logics of Worlds*.” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 18, no. 2 (2013), 143-159.
- 2012 Michael J. Olson, “Transcendental Arguments, Axiomatic Truth, and the Difficulty of Overcoming Idealism.” *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*. Eds. John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 169-190.
- 2011 Michael J. Olson, “Critical Idealism and Transcendental Materialism: A Speculative Analysis of the Second Paralogism.” *Cosmos and History*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2011), 49-61.
- 2010 Michael J. Olson, “The Intuition of Simultaneity: *Zugleichsein* and the Constitution of Extensive Magnitudes.” *Kant-Studien*, vol. 101, no. 4 (December 2010), 429-444.

2009 Michael J. Olson, "Philosophy, Non-Philosophy, and the Axiomatization of Matter." *Philosophy Today*, vol. 53, SPEP Supplement (2009), 257-262.

2009 Michael J. Olson, "Kant, Deleuze and Guattari, and the Metaphysics of Objects." *Thinking Between Deleuze and Kant*. Eds. Edward Willatt and Matt Lee (London: Continuum, 2009), 151-170.

REVIEWS

2017 Michael J. Olson, "The Metaphysics of the Epigenesis of Reason: On Jennifer Mensch's *Kant's Organicism*." *Philosophy Today*, vol. 61, no. 3 (2017), 793-799.

2016 Colin McQuillan, *Immanuel Kant: On the Very Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason* (Northwestern University Press, 2016). *Critique* (2016) goo.gl/lQS9kp.

2016 Nicholas Jolley, *Locke's Touchy Subjects: Materialism and Immortality* (Oxford University Press, 2015). *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 94, no. 4 (2016), 838-839.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Kant and the Unity of Life (manuscript in preparation).

"Kant and the Miracle of Freedom" (with Raoni Padui; revise and resubmit, *Kantian Review*).

Grants, Awards, & Fellowships

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| Visiting Researcher, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven | Summer 2020 (postponed due to COVID-19) |
| Western Sydney University Collaborative Research Grant <i>Key Texts in Early German Life Science Debates: Theories of Generation and Race, 1750-1820</i> (\$5000) | 2020 |
| <i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i> Kristeller-Popkin Travel Fellowship <i>From Embryology to Race in the Eighteenth-Century Life Sciences</i> (\$4000) | 2019 |
| Australian Award for University Teaching for Programs that Enhance Student Learning <i>Macquarie University Professional and Community Engagement (PACE)</i> | 2017 |
| Macquarie Faculty of Arts Visiting Fellowship Grant "Nature" and "World" in Classical German <i>Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy</i> (\$6000) | 2017 |
| Macquarie University CAVE Research Grant <i>Aesthetics and Politics: Research in Progress Workshop</i> (\$2500) | 2017 |

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| Macquarie University Research Projects Grant <i>Kant and the Metaphysics of Thinking</i> (\$13,000) | 2016 |
| Macquarie Faculty of Arts Emerging Scholar | 2016 |
| Macquarie University Research Travel Grant <i>Kant, Materialism, and the Unity of Thinking</i> (\$4500) | 2015 |
| Runner-up, ISIH Charles Schmitt Prize for “The Camera Obscura and the Soul” | 2013 |

Selected Presentations

“SPONTANEOUS GENERATION AND THE *BILDUNGSTRIEB*”

- Blumenbach’s *Bildungstrieb* (Göttingen, Germany: April, 2020; postponed due to COVID-19).

“DELIGIORGI ON KANT, MODALITY, AND FREEDOM”

- Leuven Kant Conference (Leuven, Belgium: May, 2020; moved online due to COVID-19).

“THE MIRACLE OF FREEDOM: THE CAUSAL CLOSURE OF NATURE IN GERMAN PHILOSOPHY FROM WOLFF TO KANT”

- Leuven Kant Conference (Leuven, Belgium: May, 2019).
- Australasian Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (Sydney, NSW: November, 2017).
- ‘Nature’ and ‘World’ in German Philosophy (Macquarie University: August, 2017).

“KANT, DOG WHISTLE POLITICS, AND THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY”

- *Natural Histories of Language: Philology, Philosophy, and Evolution* (The University of Sydney: November, 2017).
- Macalester College (St Paul, MN: February, 2017).
- *History and Authority: Political Vocabularies of the Modern Age* (The Australian National University: July, 2016).

“MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF EXPERIENCE: AETHER AND APPERCEPTION IN KANT’S *OPUS POSTUMUM*.”

- The University of Bristol (Bristol, UK: June, 2017).
- *Nature and Science in the Long Eighteenth Century* (The University of Sydney: August, 2016).
- International Society for the History of Philosophy of Science (University of Minnesota: June, 2016).

“LITERATURE IN THE GERMAN SCIENCE OF THE SOUL: JOHANN GOTTLIB KRÜGER’S *TRÄUME*”

- *Life before Darwin: Nature and Evolution, 1750-1859* (University of Sydney: May, 2017).
- *Natural History and the Life Sciences in the Long Eighteenth Century* (The University of Sydney: August, 2015).

“EARLY MODERN ANTI-MATERIALISM: ON THE VIRTUES OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY”

- University of Melbourne (Melbourne, VIC: December, 2015).
- Australasian Association of Philosophy (Sydney, NSW: May, 2015).

“THE METAPHYSICS OF THE EPIGENESIS OF REASON”

- Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy (University of New South Wales: December, 2015).

“KANT, MATERIALISM, AND THE UNITY OF THE ACTIVITY OF THINKING”

- International Kant Congress (Vienna, Austria: September, 2015).
- The University of Sydney (Sydney, NSW: March, 2015).

“PHYSIOLOGIST OF REASON, PHILOSOPHICAL ANATOMIST, PHILOSOPHER: ON SOME KANTIAN DISTINCTIONS”

- *The Philosophy of Nature in the Era of German Idealism* (The University of Sydney: June, 2015).

“THE CAMERA OBSCURA AND THE NATURE OF THE SOUL: AN EXAMINATION OF EARLY 18TH CENTURY GERMAN METAPHYSICS AND NATURAL SCIENCE”

- Hiram College (May, 2013).
- Scottish Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (University of Aberdeen, Scotland: April, 2012).

“METAPHYSICS AND SCIENCE IN KANT’S COPERNICAN REVOLUTION”

- International Society for the History of Philosophy of Science (Halifax, NS: June, 2012).
- Young Researchers Conference on Classical German Philosophy, Centrum voor Duits Idealisme (Tilburg University, Netherlands: June, 2011).
- *Repetition and Revolt* (Cornell University: April, 2011).

“A MATERIALIST TRANSCENDENTAL: ON THE ONTOLOGY OF LOGICS OF WORLDS”

- Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Montreal, QC: November, 2010).
- Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association (Albuquerque, NM: October, 2010).

“CRITICAL IDEALISM AND TRANSCENDENTAL MATERIALISM: A SPECULATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND PARALOGISM”

- *Form and Genesis* (Cornell University: April, 2010).
- *Real Objects or Material Subjects* (University of Dundee, UK: March, 2010).

“PHILOSOPHY, NON-PHILOSOPHY, AND THE AXIOMATIZATION OF MATTER”

- Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Pittsburgh, PA: October, 2008).
- *Time and Materiality* (Cornell University: April, 2007).

Dissertation

Title: Kant's Transcendental and Metaphysical Idealism

Committee: Julie Klein (director), Dalia Nassar (University of Sydney), Paul Livingston (University of New Mexico)

Abstract: In this dissertation, I argue that the now-common understanding of Kant's transcendental idealism, which holds that Kant displaces metaphysics with the more sober work of epistemology, overlooks the implicit metaphysical underpinnings of Kant's supposedly metaphysically neutral epistemology. By reading Kant in the context of the Wolfian school in which he was trained, the continuity between transcendental idealism and rationalist metaphysics emerges. The proximity of Kant's position to those of his rationalist predecessors, I argue, undermines interpretations of the former that take transcendental idealism to be merely a propaedeutic to metaphysical investigations. More specifically, I show that Kant's transcendental idealism depends upon two principles central to the rationalist metaphysical tradition: (1) a metaphysical exceptionalism that identifies subjectivity as the ground of a distinct form of activity found nowhere outside of the thinking subject, and (2) an opposition between the ahistorical nature of logical form and the pure concepts of the understanding and the historical objects of whose intelligibility they condition.

Teaching

COURSES TAUGHT AS INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD

Marquette University

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| PHIL 1001 <i>Foundations in Philosophy</i> | 2018-2020 |
| PHIL 2310 <i>Theory of Ethics</i> | 2018-2019 |

Macquarie University

Undergraduate

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| PHL 131 <i>Mind and World</i> | 2017-2018 |
| PHL 132 <i>Happiness, Goodness, Justice</i> | 2015 |
| PHL 238 <i>Existentialism</i> | 2016 |
| PHL 250 <i>Philosophy of Art and Literature</i> | 2015, 2017 |
| PHL 351 <i>Social Philosophy</i> | 2015, 2017 |
| PHL 365 <i>Film and Philosophy</i> | 2018 |
| PHL 383 <i>Philosophy Capstone</i> | 2016-2017 |

Postgraduate

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| PHIL 703 <i>Kant's Critique of Pure Reason</i> | 2016 |
| PHIL 703 <i>Aesthetics and Politics</i> (with Jean-Philippe Deranty) | 2017 |
| PHIL 703 <i>Descartes</i> | 2018 |
| PHIL 704 <i>Early Modern Materialism</i> | 2015 |
| FOAR 702 <i>Posthumanism</i> (with colleagues from English) | 2016-2017 |

Loyola University Chicago

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| PHIL 130 <i>Philosophy and Persons</i> | 2013 |
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| PHIL 181 <i>Ethics</i> | 2014 |
| PHIL 182 <i>Social and Political Philosophy</i> | 2013-2014 |
| University of Pennsylvania | |
| PHIL 055 <i>Existentialism</i> | 2013 |
| Villanova University | |
| PHI 1050 <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> | 2006-2010 |
| PHI 2190 <i>Freedom</i> | 2010 |
| PHI 2710 <i>Theories of Knowledge</i> | 2012 |
| PHI 3040 <i>History of Early Modern Philosophy</i> | 2010 |
| PHI 4150 <i>Philosophy and Film: Documentaries</i> | 2010 |
| ETH 2050 <i>Ethical Traditions and Contemporary Life</i> | 2011-2013 |

POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

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| Brendan Burnett (Macquarie University) <i>Teleology and Critical Philosophy in Kant's 'Universal History' Essay (1784)</i> | MRes, 2017 |
| Thomas Corbin (Macquarie University) <i>The Role of Counsel in Thomas Hobbes' Political Thought</i> | MRes, 2016 |

POSTGRADUATE THESIS EXAMINATION

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| Mark Doepel (University of Notre Dame Australia) <i>The Emergence and Evolution of the Concepts of 'The Author,' 'The Work,' and 'Literary Property,' with Specific Reference to Enlightenment England, 1450-1769</i> | MPhil, 2019 |
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Service & Professional Memberships

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| MENTOR, Marquette Graduate Student Teacher Training Program | 2019-2020 |
| ORGANIZER, Macquarie University Philosophy Seminar Series | 2015-2018 |
| MENTOR, Early Career Researcher Mentorship Program, <i>Australasian Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy</i> (November, 2017) | 2017 |
| ORGANIZER, <i>Aesthetics and Politics: Research in Progress Workshop</i> | 2017 |
| ORGANIZER, <i>'Nature' and 'World' in German Philosophy Workshop</i> | 2017 |
| MEMBER, AAP Postgraduate Essay Prize Jury | 2015 |

REFEREE: *Analysis* • Bloomsbury • *Critical Horizons* • *Epoché: a Journal for the History of Philosophy* • *Hypatia: a journal of feminist philosophy* • *Journal of Transcendental Philosophy* • North American Kant Society • *Res Philosophica* • Taylor and Francis.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS: Australasian Association of Philosophy (AAP) • Australian and New Zealand Society for Eighteenth Century Studies (ANZSECS) • International Society for the History of Philosophy of Science (HOPOS) • Macquarie University Centre for Agency, Values, and Ethics (CAVE) • North American Kant Society (NAKS)

References

Dr Jean-Philippe Deranty *jp.deranty@mq.edu.au*
Professor
Department of Philosophy
Macquarie University

Dr Stephen Gaukroger *stephen.gaukroger@sydney.edu.au*
Professor Emeritus
Department of History and Philosophy of Science
University of Sydney

Dr Julie Klein *julie.klein@villanova.edu*
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Villanova University

Dr Jennifer Mensch *j.mensch@westernsydney.edu.au*
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Western Sydney University

Dr Dalia Nassar *dalia.nassar@sydney.edu.au*
Senior Lecturer
Department of Philosophy
University of Sydney