

Michael J. Olson

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Education

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

Academic Appointments

Marquette University, *Director, Marquette Core Curriculum* 2024 –
Teaching Associate Professor 2023 –
Teaching Assistant Professor 2018 – 2023
Macquarie University, *Lecturer* 2014 – 2018
Loyola University Chicago, *Lecturer* 2013 – 2014

Research & Teaching

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Kant • Early Modern Philosophy • History and Philosophy of Science

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Aesthetics • Political Philosophy • Ethics

Publications

ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2025 Michael J. Olson, “Spontaneous Generation and the *Bildungstrieb*.” *Annals of the History and Philosophy of Biology*, vol. 29: 93–104.
- 2024 Michael J. Olson, “The History of the Humanities and the History of Science in the Early Natural History of the Kangaroo.” *The Shaping of the Sciences: Essays in homage to Stephen*

Gaukroger. Eds. Charles Wolfe and Anik Waldow (Cham: Springer), 153–161.

- 2024 Jennifer Mensch and Michael J. Olson, Introduction to "Reading Forster, Reading Race: Philosophy, Politics, and Natural History in the German Enlightenment," *Lessing Yearbook*, vol. 51: 75–78.
- 2024 Michael J. Olson, "Slavery and Enthusiasm in the German Enlightenment: The Case of Christoph Meiners." *Lessing Yearbook*, vol. 51: 169–176.
- 2024 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, 2024), 271–292.
- 2024 Michael J. Olson, "Rediscovering Kant as a Reader: The Early Physical Geography Lectures," *Goethe Yearbook*, vol. 31: 127–134.
- 2023 Michael J. Olson, "Scientific Metaphysics and Metaphysical Science: The Demand for Systematicity in Kant's Transition Project." *Metaphysics as a Science in Classical German Philosophy*. Eds. Toby Lovat and Robb Dunphy (London: Routledge, 2023), 167–183.
- 2023 Jennifer Mensch and Michael J. Olson, "How Philosophers Have Influenced the Way You Think about Race," *Futurum: Inspiring the Next Generation*, vol. 21: 12–15.
- 2020 Michael J. Olson, "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, 2020).
- 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

- 2024 Catherine Wilson, *Kant & the Naturalistic Turn of 18th Century Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2022), *Annals of Science*, vol. 81, no. 3: 444–446.
- 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

Jennifer Mensch and Michael J. Olson (eds.), *Generation, Heredity, Race: Key Texts in the History and Philosophy of the German Life Sciences, 1745–1845*

Sebastian Luft (ed.), *Wilhelm Windelband: Transcendental Philosophy, Value Theory, Philosophy of Culture*, trans. Sebastian Luft and Michael Olson (Oxford University Press, under contract)

Grants, Awards, & Fellowships

Way-Klinger Teaching Enhancement Award (with Amelia Zurcher) <i>The Marquette Core Culminating Course as Citizens' Assembly</i> (\$20,000)	2026–2027
Marquette University Honors Class of 2026 Faculty Award	2026
Northwestern Mutual Data Science Institute Student Scholars Grant (with Kevin Chovanec) <i>Piloting Open-Source AI for NLP-Based Assessment of Student Writing Across Core Learning Outcomes</i> (\$2500)	2026
Marquette University Faculty Mission Integration Fellowship (\$10,000)	2023–2024
Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies Mini-grant (\$300)	2023
Marquette University Participating Faculty Research Award	2022
Western Sydney University Collaborative Research Grant (with Jennifer Mensch) <i>Key Texts in Early German Life Science Debates: Theories of Generation and Race, 1750–1820</i> (\$20,000)	2021–2022
Marquette University Participating Faculty Research Grant <i>From Embryology to Empire: Tracing the Enlightenment Life Sciences</i> (\$2400)	2021
<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
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 2015
Kant, Materialism, and the Unity of Thinking (\$4500)

Runner-up, ISIH Charles Schmitt Prize 2013
for “The Camera Obscura and the Soul”

Selected Presentations

“KANT’S ‘ESSAY ON THE MALADIES OF THE HEAD’ (1764)”

- *The Young Kant* (Northwestern University: May, 2024).

“SLAVERY AND ENTHUSIASM IN THE GERMAN ENLIGHTENMENT: THE CASE OF CHRISTOPH MEINERS”

- *Slavery and Abolition in Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (Emory University: May, 2026).
- *Peace, Violence, and the Highest Good: Kantian Perspectives on Morality and History* (Marquette University: March, 2024).

“TRANSLATING THE PACIFIC: GEORG FORSTER AND THE ORDER OF NATURE IN MEINERS, KANT, AND HERDER” (WITH JENNIFER MENSCH)

- *German Studies Association* (Montreal, QC: October, 2023).

“REPRESENTING FOREIGN CULTURES IN THE AGE OF EXPLORATION: GERMAN NATURAL HISTORY IN WORD AND IMAGE”

- *Classical and Contemporary Themes from the Philosophy of Culture* (Marquette University: February, 2022).

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

- Indiana Philosophical Association (Bloomington, IN: November, 2021)
- Leuven Kant Conference (Leuven, Belgium: May, 2019).

“SPONTANEOUS GENERATION AND THE *BILDUNGSTRIEB*”

- Blumenbach’s *Bildungstrieb* (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen: October, 2021; online).

“SCIENTIFIC METAPHYSICS AND METAPHYSICAL SCIENCE”

- *Metaphysics as a Science in Classical German Philosophy* (University College Dublin: July, 2021; online).

“TUNA ON KANT AND IMAGINATIVE RESISTANCE”

- Central APA (online: February, 2021)

“KANT AND ‘THE LIMITLESS FIELD OF ONEIRIC TRANSCENDENTAL MEDICINE’”

- Leuven Seminar in Classical German Philosophy (Leuven, Belgium; via Zoom: October, 2020).

“DELIGIORGI ON KANT, MODALITY, AND FREEDOM”

- Leuven Kant Conference (Leuven, Belgium; via Zoom: May, 2020).

“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 GOTTLOB 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).

Teaching

COURSES TAUGHT

Marquette University

PHIL 1001 <i>Foundations in Philosophy</i>	2018–2024
PHIL 2310 <i>Theory of Ethics</i>	2018–2019
PHIL 3650 <i>Early Modern Philosophy</i>	2024
ARSC 1953 <i>Exploring Arts and Sciences</i>	2022
CORE 1929 <i>Foundations in Methods of Inquiry</i>	2025–2026
CORE 4929 <i>Service of Faith and Promotion of Justice</i>	2021–2023

Macquarie University

Undergraduate

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

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	
PHIL 130 <i>Philosophy and Persons</i>	2013
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

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

POSTGRADUATE EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION COMMITTEES

Kevin McKevitt (Marquette University)	PhD, in progress
<i>On Søren Kierkegaard's Conception of the Ethical: With Continual Reference to Lévinas</i>	
Seth Kreeger (Marquette University)	DQP, 2022
"Aquinas' Attribution of Creation to Plato and Aristotle: The Importance of Avicenna"	
Mark Doepel (University of Notre Dame Australia)	MPhil, 2019
<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>	

Service & Professional Memberships

CO-EDITOR (with Sebastian Luft and Dalia Nassar), De Gruyter book series	2023–
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New Studies in the History and Historiography of Philosophy

ORGANIZER, Marquette Philosophy Colloquium 2022–2024

ORGANIZER, Macquarie University Philosophy Seminar Series 2015–2018

MENTOR, Early Career Researcher Mentorship Program, 2017
Australasian Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (November, 2017)

ORGANIZER, *Aesthetics and Politics: Research in Progress Workshop* 2017

ORGANIZER, ‘Nature’ and ‘World’ in German Philosophy Workshop 2017

MEMBER, AAP Postgraduate Essay Prize Jury 2015

REFEREE: *Analysis* • *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* • Bloomsbury • *Critical Horizons* • *Epoché: a Journal for the History of Philosophy* • *Hypatia: a journal of feminist philosophy* • *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* • *Jesuit Higher Education* • *Journal of Transcendental Philosophy* • *Kant-Studien* • North American Kant Society • *Res Philosophica* • *Revista di estetica* • *Symphilosophie: International Journal of Romantic Philosophy* • Taylor and Francis