

Sean M. Costello

University of Michigan
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RESEARCH AREAS

Areas of Specialization: Early Modern Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy

Areas of Competency: Medieval Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics

EDUCATION

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor , Ph.D. in Philosophy	Expected 2027
Dissertation: <i>Early Modern Dualisms: Descartes, More, and Clarke</i>	
Chair: Tad M. Schmaltz	
Committee: Sonya Özbey, Marleen Rozemond (Toronto), Jamie Tappenden	
Graduate Certificate in Cognitive Science	2022
University of Oxford, Hertford College , M.St. in Ancient Philosophy (<i>Distinction</i>)	2020
Thesis: ‘An Ecological Approach to Aristotle’s Theories of Light and Vision’	
Supervisor: Anna Marmodoro	
University of Notre Dame , B.A. in Philosophy and International Economics (<i>Summa cum laude</i>)	2016

PUBLICATIONS

‘Nocturnal Vision in Plato’s <i>Timaeus</i> ’. <i>Ancient Philosophy</i> (44.1), 59–81. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5840/ancientphil20244414 .	2024
‘Anne Conway on memory’. <i>British Journal for the History of Philosophy</i> (31.5), 912–931. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2023.2164920 .	2023
‘Aristotle on Light and Vision: An “Ecological” Interpretation’. <i>Apeiron</i> (55.2), 247–279. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/apeiron-2019-0063 .	2022
‘The Object of Aristotle’s God’s Νόησις in <i>Metaphysics</i> Λ.9’. <i>The Journal of Greco-Roman Studies</i> (57.3), 49–66. DOI: https://doi.org/10.23933/jgrs.2019.57.3.49 .	2018

BOOK REVIEWS

‘Review of Christian Pfeiffer, <i>Aristotle’s Theory of Bodies</i> ’. <i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i> . Review number: 2019.09.10. http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2019/2019-09-10.html .	2019
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AWARDS AND HONOURS

Faculty Teaching Prize for Excellence in Teaching, <i>University of Michigan, Dept. of Philosophy</i>	2026
\$500 USD awarded on the basis of faculty observation and student evaluations.	
Rackham One-Term Dissertation Fellowship (x2), <i>University of Michigan</i>	Winter 2024 and Fall 2024
\$13,770 USD per term plus all university fees and a teaching release.	
Rackham Conference Travel Grant (x3), <i>University of Michigan</i>	2024 – 2026
\$1,150 USD to defray costs of international travel associated with presenting research.	
Hertford Senior Scholarship, <i>University of Oxford, Hertford College</i>	2019 – 2021
£5,000 GBP plus accommodation rights, dining rights, and Associate Membership of the Senior Common Room. Awarded for an outstanding record of academic achievement.	
Blackwell's Scholarship, <i>University of Oxford</i>	2017 – 2018
£1,200 GBP awarded for academic excellence.	
Thomas J. McMahon IV Endowment for Excellence for the Pursuit of Scholarship	2017 – 2020
£11,366 GBP awarded for postgraduate study at the University of Oxford.	
Dockweiler Medal in Philosophy, <i>University of Notre Dame, Dept. of Philosophy</i>	2016
Medal awarded for best undergraduate essay on a topic on a philosophical theme.	
Phi Beta Kappa, <i>University of Notre Dame</i>	2016

PRESENTATIONS

'Descartes's Separability Argument for Substance Dualism'	Central Division of the American Philosophical Association, Denver	February 2027
	Forum Descartes, Turin	January 2026
'Descartes's Indivisibility Argument for Substance Dualism'	York University Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy	June 2025
'Henry More on the Indiscernible, Extended, Spirit'	Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, New York City	January 2025
	Forum Descartes, Paris	January 2024
'Émilie Du Châtelet on Love'	Women, Dignity, and Reason in the Early Modern Period (1600–1800), Monash University	December 2024
	University of Villanova Conference on the Philosophy of Love	April 2024
'The Stoics on Visual Perception'	Central Division of the American Philosophical Association, New Orleans	February 2024

PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED ...)

‘Aristotle on the Role of Emotion in Memory’ Cambridge History of Memory and Emotions Workshop, Cambridge University 14 th London Ancient Science Conference, Institute of Classical Studies	October 2022 February 2020
‘Anne Conway on Memory’ New Voices on Women in the History of Philosophy Virtual Conference, Centre for the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists	February 2022
‘Disambiguating Anaxagoras on ψυχή, νοῦς, and their relation to σπέρματα’ VOID: Early Greek Philosophy Workshop, University of Kent 13 th London Ancient Science Conference, Institute of Classical Studies	September 2021 February 2019
‘Aristotle on Building the World from the Ground (and other Elements) Up: An Education-Driven Theory of Hylomorphic Ordinary-Object Ontology’ Change and Changemakers in Ancient Philosophy, Change and Changemakers Network (Siegen) The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, Christopher Newport University	July 2021 October 2018
‘Nocturnal Vision in Plato’s <i>Timaeus</i> ’ The 44 th Ancient Philosophy Workshop, University of Texas at Austin	March 2021
‘Aquinas on Artifacts and Substances’ What Is the Matter of/with Medieval Philosophy? The Matter of Metaphysics, International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds	July 2019
‘Aristotle on Light and Vision: An “Ecological” Interpretation’ Sensual Reflections: Re-Thinking the Role of the Senses in the Greco-Roman World, University of Cambridge	December 2018
‘Τὸ ὅτι Θεαυτόν: The Object of God’s Νόησις in <i>Metaphysics</i> Λ.9’ Postgraduate Work-in-Progress Seminar, The Institute of Classical Studies	November 2018
‘The Dangers of a User-Based Model of the Self: A Regress at <i>Alcibiades I</i> , 129b–130c’ Plato’s <i>Alcibiades I</i> Revisited, University of Cambridge	September 2018
‘Biological Teleology in “The Rainfall Argument” of <i>Physics</i> II.8’ Teleology, Intelligence and Life in the Platonic and Aristotelian Tradition, University of St. Andrews	June 2018

COMMENTS

On Amedeo Robiolio’s ‘Descartes and Leibniz on Cogitation and Pure Intellection’ Forum Descartes, Turin	January 2026
On Fanhao Meng’s ‘Malebranche on Acting by General Volitions’ Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy, University of Michigan	April 2025

COMMENTS (CONTINUED ...)

On Vincent Navarro's 'Spinoza on Necessitarianism, Freedom, Affects' Forum Descartes, Utrecht	January 2025
On Luca Dondoni's 'What is a Cloud? (<i>Timaeus</i> 49a1–53a7)', Fourth Rackham Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, University of Michigan	May 2023
On Harry Alanen's ' <i>Kinēsis</i> vs. <i>Energeia</i> : A Defence of <i>Metaphysics</i> Θ.6, 1048b18-35' Central Division of the American Philosophical Association, Denver	February 2023
On Elena Comay del Junco's 'Aristotle's Erotic Theology' First Rackham Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, University of Michigan	October 2020

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

The Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy University of Michigan. Keynote speaker: Marleen Rozemond	April 2025
The 4 th Rackham Workshop in Ancient Philosophy University of Michigan. Keynote speaker: Christian Wildberg	May 2023
The 3 rd Rackham Workshop in Ancient Philosophy University of Michigan. Keynote speaker: Alan Code	May 2022
The 22 nd Oxford Graduate Philosophy Conference University of Oxford. Keynote speakers: Martha Nussbaum and Anna Marmodoro	November 2018

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Teacher Certificate, *University of Michigan, Center for Research on Learning & Teaching* 2022

Primary Instructor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Phil 151. Love, Loving, and Loss	Fall Term 2023
Phil 152. The Self	Summer Term 2023

Graduate Student Instructor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Phil 361. Ethics and Film (for Rachael Goodyer)	Fall Term 2026
Phil 361. Ethics (for Dan Lowe)	Winter Term 2026
Phil 361. Ethics (for Dan Lowe)	Winter Term 2025
Phil 101. Introduction to Philosophy (for Jim Joyce)	Winter Term 2023
Phil 101. Introduction to Philosophy (for Maegan Fairchild)	Fall Term 2022
Phil 289. Descartes to Kant (for Janum Sethi)	Winter Term 2022
Phil 340. Minds and Machines (for Eric Swanson)	Fall Term 2021

Revision Classes at the University of Oxford, Hertford College

Plato's <i>Republic</i>	Hilary and Trinity Terms 2020
Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	Hilary and Trinity Terms 2020

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Member of the APA Task Force on Enrollment and Major Recruitment	2023 – Present
Associate Editor of <i>The Philosopher's Annual</i>	2023
Member of the Michigan Philosophy Graduate Admissions Committee	2022 – 2023
Member of the American Philosophical Association Executive Board	2022 – 2024
Member of the APA Graduate Student Council	2021 – 2025
Chair of the APA Graduate Council	2022 – 2024
Secretary of the APA Graduate Student Council	2021 – 2022
Postgraduate Rep. to the British Philosophical Association Executive Committee	2019 – 2020
President of the British Postgraduate Philosophy Association	2019 – 2020
Chair of the Ockham Society Committee, <i>University of Oxford, Faculty of Philosophy</i>	2018 – 2020
Chair of the Jowett Society Committee, <i>University of Oxford, Faculty of Philosophy</i>	2018 – 2019

ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Graduate Student Teaching Mentor, <i>University of Michigan, Dept. of Philosophy</i>	2025
Graduate Student Instructional Consultant <i>University of Michigan, Center for Research on Learning & Teaching</i>	2023 – 2025
Student Advisory Board, <i>University of Michigan, Sweetland Center for Writing</i>	2022 – 2023
President of the Middle and Junior Common Rooms, <i>University of Oxford, Blackfriars Hall</i>	2018 – 2019

LANGUAGES

English: native speaker
French: research-level proficiency
Spanish: research-level proficiency

Latin: research-level proficiency
Attic Greek: research-level proficiency

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that the course was audited.

University of Michigan

Spinoza's *Ethics* (Tad Schmaltz)*
Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Cognitive Science (Rick Lewis)
Mathematical Logic (Jamie Tappenden)
Accelerated Reading in French (Eric Beuerlein)*
Parrhēsia, or the Courage of Truth (David Halperin)
Interpretation of the Greek Papyri (Brendan Haug)
Women in Early Modern Philosophy (Tad Schmaltz)
Ancients & Medievals on Fate, Necessity, and Freedom (Tamer Nawar)

Meta-metaphysics (David Baker)
Stoic Philosophy of Mind (Victor Caston)
Proseminar (Eric Swanson)
Intentions (Ishani Maitra)
Cognition (Eric Lormand)
Plato's *Timaeus* (Sara Ahbel-Rappe)
Consciousness (Eric Lormand)

University of Oxford

The Ontology of Action: Aristotle and After (Ursula Coope)
Metaphysics (Alex Kaiserman)
Aristotle's *Ethics* (Terence Irwin)
Proseminar (Paul Elbourne & Adrian Moore)
Self-Consciousness, Agency, and Time (Anil Gomes & Jennifer Hornsby)
Arguments Against God (Brian Leftow)
Aesthetics (Alison Hills)
Metaphysics (Tim Williamson)
Phenomenology (Joseph Schear)

REFERENCES

Tad Schmaltz

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Jean-Pascal Anfray

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Jamie Tappenden (Teaching)

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