

# Robert Fraser (né Knowles)

## Curriculum Vitae

Department of Politics, Philosophy, and International Relations  
Swansea University  
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Wales, UK  
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**AOS:** Philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of language, metaphysics, epistemology.

**AOC:** Logic, philosophical logic, philosophy of religion, history of philosophy.

### Education

|           |  |                          |
|-----------|--|--------------------------|
| 2011–2015 | <b>PhD Philosophy</b> (No corrections) | University of Manchester |
| 2010–2011 | <b>MRes Philosophy</b> (Distinction)   | University of Manchester |
| 2007–2010 | <b>BA(Hons) Philosophy</b> (2:1)       | University of Manchester |

### Employment

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| 2021–     | <b>Lecturer</b>                            | Swansea University, Grade 8 0.6 FTE      |
| 2023–2024 | <b>Teaching Fellow</b>                     | Coventry University, Grade 8 0.2 FTE     |
| 2021–2022 | <b>Lecturer</b>                            | University of Bristol, Level 7 1.0 FTE   |
| 2021      | <b>Visiting Lecturer</b>                   | University of Lancaster, Level 7 0.2 FTE |
| 2020      | <b>Teaching Fellow</b>                     | University of Leeds, Level 7 1.0 FTE     |
| 2017–2020 | <b>British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow</b> | University of Leeds, Level 7 1.0 FTE     |
| 2016–2017 | <b>Teaching Fellow</b>                     | University of Leeds, Level 7 1.0 FTE     |

### Publications

|      |   |      |
|------|---|------|
| 2026 | <b>The Problem of Extra-Mathematical Explanation</b>                          | (12) |
|      | <i>Synthese</i> 207   |      |
| 2025 | <b>The Individuation of Mathematical Objects</b>                              | (11) |
|      | <i>Synthese</i> 205 (with Bahram Assadian)                                    |      |
| 2024 | <b>The Social Reality of Virtual Worlds</b>                                   | (10) |
|      | <i>Metaphysics</i> 7: 85–98   |      |
| 2022 | <b>No Grounds for Fictionalism</b>  | (9)  |
|      | <i>Philosophical Studies</i> 179: 3679–3687                                   |      |
| 2021 | <b>Unification and Mathematical Explanation</b>                               | (8)  |
|      | <i>Philosophical Studies</i> 178: 3923–3943                                   |      |
| 2021 | <b>Platonic Relations and Mathematical Explanations</b>                       | (7)  |
|      | <i>The Philosophical Quarterly</i> 71: 623–644                                |      |
| 2021 | <b>Mathematics and Explanatory Generality: Nothing but Cognitive Salience</b> | (6)  |
|      | <i>Erkenntnis</i> 86: 1119–1137 (with Juha Saatsi)                            |      |
| 2021 | <b>The Uncanny Accuracy of God’s Mathematical Beliefs</b>                     | (5)  |
|      | <i>Religious Studies</i> 57: 333–352  |      |
| 2016 | <b>Semantic Assumptions in the Philosophy of Mathematics</b>                  | (4)  |
|      | <i>Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science</i> 318: 43–65                 |      |

- 2015 **Good Weasel Hunting** (3)  
*Synthese* 192: 3397–3412 (with David Liggins)
- 2015 **What ‘The Number of Planets is Eight’ Means** (2)  
*Philosophical Studies* 172: 2757–2775
- 2015 **Heavy Duty Platonism** (1)  
*Erkenntnis* 80: 1255–1270

## Teaching

### Module Coordinator & Lecturer & Tutor

Swansea University

- 2024– HUP319 Reality and Cognition: Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology  
 2023– HUP127 Fundamental Issues in Philosophy  
 2023– HUP105 Critical Reasoning  
 2022– HUP243 Philosophy of the Enlightenment  
 2023 PO-127 Disinformation, Ideology, and Bias: Researching and Examining Political Data  
 2023 HUP242 Freedom, Angst, and the Embodied Self: Themes in Continental Philosophy

Coventry University

- 2024 4058HUM Ethics of Climate Change  
 2023 4060HUM Philosophical Methods

University of Bristol

- 2022 PHIL20039 Philosophy of Mathematics  
 2021 PHILM0021 Epistemology and Metaphysics

Lancaster University

- 2021 PPR307 Transformations and Revolutions in Twentieth Century Philosophy

University of Leeds

- 2020 PHIL3123 Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics  
 2020 PHIL2121 Introduction to Philosophy of Language  
 2019 PHIL2422 Topics in Epistemology: Knowledge and Justification  
 2016 PHIL2521 Realism and Antirealism  
 2016 PHIL2542 Introduction to Metaphysics  
 2016 PHIL2532 Philosophy of Religion

### Supervisor

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|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| 2022–     | PO-3317 Dissertation                   | University of Swansea |
| 2022–     | PO-M25 Dissertation                    | University of Swansea |
| 2022      | PHILM0001 Philosophy Dissertation      | University of Bristol |
| 2022      | PHIL30108 Second Extended Essay        | University of Bristol |
| 2021      | PHIL30107 First Extended Essay         | University of Bristol |
| 2021–2022 | PHILM0041 Supervised Independent Study | University of Bristol |
| 2016–2020 | PHIL3000 Independent Research Project  | University of Leeds   |

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|--------------|--|--------------------------|
| 2017         | PHIL5170M Philosophy Dissertation                            | University of Leeds      |
| <b>Tutor</b> |  |                          |
| 2022         | PHIL20053 Space, Time, and Matter                            | University of Bristol    |
| 2021         | PHIL30107 Writing Workshops                                  | University of Bristol    |
| 2018–2020    | PHIL5002M Analytic B: Mathematics and Empirical Evidence     | University of Leeds      |
| 2016–2019    | PHIL1250 How to Think Clearly and Argue Well                 | University of Leeds      |
| 2017         | PHIL2122 Formal Logic  | University of Leeds      |
| 2016         | PHIL2422 Topics in Epistemology: Knowledge and Justification | University of Leeds      |
| 2016         | PHIL1140 I Think Therefore I Am: The Philosophy of Descartes | University of Leeds      |
| 2016         | PHIL1005 The Mind  | University of Leeds      |
| 2013–2015    | PHIL20021 Philosophy of Religion                             | University of Manchester |
| 2012–2015    | PHIL10041 Critical Thinking                                  | University of Manchester |
| 2015         | PHIL10021 Values We Live By                                  | University of Manchester |
| 2015         | PHIL10401 History of Philosophy                              | University of Manchester |
| 2014         | PHIL10641 Philosophy and Social Science                      | University of Manchester |
| 2014         | PHIL10622 Discovering Reality                                | University of Manchester |

### **Philosophy in Schools (The Royal Institute of Philosophy)**

|      |                             |   |
|------|-----------------------------|---|
| 2015 | Metaphysics                 | Xaverian Sixth Form College             |
| 2014 | Intro to Western Philosophy | Xaverian Sixth Form College             |
| 2014 | Think                       | Xaverian Sixth Form College             |
| 2013 | Philosophy of Language      | Xaverian Sixth Form College             |
| 2013 | Philosophy of Language      | Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College |

### **Grants and Awards**

|      |   |          |
|------|---|----------|
| 2019 | BSPS Conference Grant                                     | £500     |
| 2019 | Aristotelian Society Conference Grant                     | £235     |
| 2017 | British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship                   | £319,196 |
| 2015 | Manchester Doctoral College Best Outstanding Output Award |          |
| 2014 | Royal Institute of Philosophy's Jacobsen Studentship      |          |
| 2013 | Mind Association Minor Conference Grant                   |          |
| 2013 | Analysis Trust Conference Grant                           |          |
| 2011 | AHRC Studentship  |          |

### **Research Events**

#### **Organiser & Host**

|           |  |                     |
|-----------|--|---------------------|
| 2025      | Philosophy Research Group SW Philosophy Event          | Swansea University  |
| 2024      | Philosophy Research Group Launch Event                 | Swansea University  |
| 2022–     | Philosophy Research Group Seminar                      | Swansea University  |
| Sept 2019 | Mathematics and its Applications: Philosophical Issues | University of Leeds |

Nov 2018 Epistemology of Mathematics University of Leeds  
Dec 2017 Applicability of Mathematics University of Leeds  
July 2013 Open Minds VIII Graduate Conference University of Manchester

### **Assistant**

July 2015 BSPS Annual Conference University of Manchester

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### **Selected Presentations**

Sept 2025 A Theory of Social Structural Explanation  
ENPOSS, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Sept 2025 Coming into Existence  
Metaphysics Workshop, University of Gothenburg

Dec 2023 The Problem of Mathematical Explanation  
Explanation and Understanding in Philosophy and Science, University of Belgrade and Serbian Academy of Sciences

May 2022 Distinctively Mathematical Explanation: A Deflationary Proposal  
Mathematics as/in Science, University of Ghent

Dec 2021 Distinctively Mathematical Explanation: A Deflationary Proposal  
Departmental Seminar, University of Bristol

Dec 2021 On the Alleged Necessity of Mathematical Nominalism (with Bahram Assadian  
Foundational Studies Bristol (FSB), University of Bristol

June 2018 Alethic Appearances  
Context, Cognition, and Communication, University of Warsaw

April 2018 Explanatory Mathematical Abstraction in Science  
Varieties of Mathematical Abstraction, University of Vienna

March 2017 Non-Optimal Support for Mathematical Platonism  
The Explanatory Function of Abstract Objects, University of Santiago de Compostela

May 2016 Non-Optimal Support for Mathematical Realism  
FilMat: Truth, Existence, and Explanation, University of Chieti-Pescara

July 2014 The Indispensability Argument Dispensed With  
88th Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association, University of Cambridge

May 2014 What 'The Number of Planets is Eight' Means  
FilMat: Objectivity, Cognition, and Proof, Vita-Salute San Raffaele University

Jan 2014 Heavy Duty Platonism  
6th Conference of the Dutch-Flemish Association for Analytic Philosophy, University of Groningen

June 2013 The Problem of Mathematical Communication  
Graduate Conference on Ontology, University of Warsaw

Jan 2013 Reply to Liggins  
Ethics and Explanation, University of Nottingham

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### **Academic Service**

#### **Research Group Lead**

Founder and lead for the Philosophy Research Group at Swansea University

### **External Subject Specialist**

Consultant in the development of the BA(Hons) in Philosophy at Coventry University

### **Referee**

*Analysis, Australasian Journal of Philosophy, Erkenntnis, Synthese, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Science, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Journal of the American Philosophical Association, Religious Studies, Disputatio*

2017 **REF Grade Internal Peer-Review Committee**

School of PRHS, University of Leeds

2012–2013 **Graduate Representative**

Department of Philosophy, University of Manchester

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## Outreach and Public Engagement

2025 **Speaker - Philosophy at the Cinema *The Truman Show***

Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea University

2025 **Organiser - Henry Taylor ‘Are Robots the Future?’**

Oxfam Books & Music, Swansea

2024 **Speaker - The Problem of Mathematical Explanation**

Kant’s Cave Lecture, Philosophy for All, London

2020 **Contributor - Double Check: Is Math Real?**

Interview by Edie Miller: <https://www.logically.ai/articles/double-check-is-math-real>

2018 **Speaker - Mathematics: Invented, Discovered, or Neither?**

With Jack Woods and Simon Hewitt. Café Scientifique, Leeds

2013–2015 **Teacher - Philosophy Club Coordinator**, (Royal Institute of Philosophy)

Xaverian Sixth-Form College, Blessed Thomas Holford Sixth-Form College, Manchester

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## Referees

### **Dr. Matthew Wall**

Professor of Politics  
Swansea University  
m.t.wall@swansea.ac.uk  
+44 1792 602987  
Head of Department

### **Professor James Ladyman**

Professor of Philosophy  
University of Bristol  
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+44 117 331 0934  
Head of Department

### **Dr. Scott A. Shalkowski**

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy  
University of Leeds  
s.shalkowski@leeds.ac.uk  
+44 113 343 3280  
Deputy Head of School

### **Dr. Juha Saatsi**

Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of Leeds  
j.t.saatsi@leeds.ac.uk  
+44 113 343 3383  
Research Mentor

### **Dr. Anthony Everett**

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy  
University of Bristol  
anthony.everett@bristol.ac.uk  
+44 117 954 6796  
PhD External Examiner

### **Professor Mary Leng**

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy  
University of York  
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+44 190 432 3256  
PhD External Examiner

**Dr. David Liggins**

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy  
University of Manchester  
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+44 161 306 6947  
PhD Supervisor