

Michael W. Hickson

Department of Philosophy
Trent University
1755 West Bank Drive
Peterborough, ON, K9L 1Z6

Office: Lady Eaton College S108
Phone: +1 705 748-1011 x7278
Email: michaelhickson@trentu.ca

Area of Research Specialization

Early Modern Philosophy. History of Skepticism.

Areas of Research and Teaching Competence

Epistemology. Logic. Philosophy of Religion. Applied Ethics.

Academic Appointments and Affiliations

Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario
Chair, Department of Philosophy, 2021 – present.
Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, 2013 – present (tenured in 2018).
Graduate Faculty Member, Applied Modelling and Quantitative Methods, 2015 – 2022.

Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California
Assistant Professor (tenure-track), Department of Philosophy, 2011 – 2013.
Faculty Scholar, Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, 2012 – 2013.

University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana
Early Modern Research Fellow, Center for Philosophy of Religion, 2010 – 2011.

University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Assistant Professor (limited term), Department of Philosophy, 2009 – 2010.

Education

Ph.D. Philosophy. *University of Western Ontario*. 2010.
With distinction.

Dissertation: “Solomon’s Cipher: Evil, Skepticism, and Toleration in Bayle.”
Committee: Thomas M. Lennon (Chair); Lorne Falkenstein; Corey Dyck.

M.A. Philosophy. *The Catholic University of America*. 2006.
Magna cum laude (oral examination).

Thesis: “Moral Improvement in Kant: Possibility and Realization”
Supervisor: Richard Velkley

Carnegie Mellon University. 2002 – 2004.
Enrolled in PhD program in Logic, Computation, and Methodology.

B.A. Philosophy. *University of Western Ontario*. 2002.
Faculty of Arts Gold Medal. Philosophy Gold Medal.

Publications

Edited Book

- B1** Pierre Bayle. *Dialogues of Maximus and Themistius*. Translated, edited, and introduced by Michael W. Hickson. Brill's Texts and Sources in Intellectual History 256/18. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Research Articles, Chapters, and Entries

- A22** "Pierre Bayle and the Persecutor's Mind." In Alonso, Marta García, and Armando Menéndez Viso, "Ilustración y cristianismo en las obras de Bayle y Feijoo, Oviedo," 42-58, *Anejos de Cuadernos de Estudios del Siglo XVIII* 11 (2023).
- A21** "Pierre Bayle", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2023/entries/bayle/>].
- A20** "Illusory Checkmates: Why Chess is Not a Game." *Synthese* 200, no. 5 (2022): 1-21.
- A19** "Pierre Bayle." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Renaissance and Reformation*. Ed. Margaret King. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. [<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0482.xml?rskey=eNtcVY&result=1&q=bayle#firstMatch>].
- A18** "The Role of Skepticism in Bayle's Theory of Toleration." In *Sceptical Doubt and Disbelief in Modern European Thought: A New Pan-American Dialogue*, edited by Vicente Raga Rosaleny and Plínio Junqueira Smith, 161-76, Springer, 2021.
- A17** "Simon Foucher and Anti-Cartesian Skepticism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Descartes and Cartesianism*, edited by Delphine Antoine-Mahut, Steven Nadler, and Tad Schmaltz, 678-90, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- A16** "Bayle on *Évidence* as a Criterion of Truth." In *Libertinage et philosophie à l'époque classique (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle), n° 14, La pensée de Pierre Bayle*, edited by Antony McKenna (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018).
- A15** "Pierre Bayle and the Secularization of Conscience." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 79:2 (2018), 199-220.
- A14** "Varieties of Academic Skepticism in Early Modern Philosophy: Pierre-Daniel Huet and Simon Foucher." In *Skepticism: From Antiquity to the Present*, 320-341, edited by Diego Machuca and Baron Reed (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).
- A13** with Thomas M. Lennon. "The Rise of Religious Skepticism in the Seventeenth Century." In *The Routledge Companion to Seventeenth-century Philosophy*, 563-582, edited by Dan Kaufman (New York/London: Routledge, 2018).
- A12** "Disagreement and Academic Skepticism in Bayle." In *Academic Scepticism in the Development of Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by Plínio Junqueira Smith and Sébastien Charles. International Archives of the History of Ideas 221 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2017), 293-318.
- A11** "Pierre Bayle." In *The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon*, edited by Lawrence Nolan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 55-56.

- A10** “The Immortality of the Soul.” In *The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon*, edited by Lawrence Nolan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 686-690.
- A9** “Belief and Invincible Objections: Bayle, Le Clerc, Leibniz.” In *Leibniz et Bayle: Confrontation et Dialogue*, edited by Christian Leduc, Paul Rateau, and Jean-Luc Solère. *Studia Leibnitiana Sonderheft* 43 (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015), 69-86.
- A8** “A Brief History of Problems of Evil.” In *A Companion to the Problem of Evil*, edited by Justin McBrayer and Daniel Howard-Snyder (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 3-18.
- A7** “Theodicy and Toleration in Bayle’s *Dictionary*.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 51:1 (2013), 49-73.
- A6** with Thomas M. Lennon. “The Skepticism of the First Meditation.” In *Descartes’ Meditations: A Critical Guide*, edited by Karen Detlefsen, (Cambridge UP, 2013), 9-24.
- A5** “*Reductio ad malum*: Bayle’s Early Skepticism about Theodicy.” *Modern Schoolman* 88:3/4 (2011): 201-221.
- A4** “The Moral Certainty of Immortality in Descartes.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 28:3 (July 2011), 227-46.
- A3** “Conscientious Refusals without Conscience: Why Not?” *Philo: A Journal of Philosophy* 13:2 (2011), 167–84.
- A2** “The Message of Bayle’s Last Title: Providence and Toleration in the *Entretiens de Maxime et de Themiste*.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71:4 (2010), 547-67.
- A1** with Thomas M. Lennon. “The Real Significance of Bayle’s Authorship of the *Avis*.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17:1 (2009), 191–205.

Popular

- P3** “Why Canada Should Invest More in Teaching Kids How to Play Chess.” *The Conversation*. 13 October 2022. [https://theconversation.com/why-canada-should-invest-more-in-teaching-kids-how-to-play-chess-191413#:~:text=Teaching%20chess%20in%20Canadian%20schools,learn%2C%20compete%20and%20have%20fun.]
- P2** with Paul Frost, Michael Epp, and Marguerite Xenopoulos. “Scientific Certainty Survival Kit: How to Push Back Against Skeptics Who Exploit Uncertainty for Political Gain.” *The Conversation*. 3 January 2022. [https://theconversation.com/scientific-certainty-survival-kit-how-to-push-back-against-skeptics-who-exploit-uncertainty-for-political-gain-173578].
- P1** “How a Huguenot Philosopher Realized that Atheists could be Virtuous.” *Aeon*, 18 September 2018 [https://aeon.co/ideas/how-a-huguenot-philosopher-realised-that-atheists-could-be-virtuous].

Book Reviews

- R9** Review of José R. Maia Neto, *Academic Skepticism in Seventeenth-Century French Philosophy: The Charronian Legacy, 1601-1662* (Springer, 2014). In *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism*.

- R8** Review of Sébastien Charles and Plinio J. Smith (eds.), *Scepticism in the Eighteenth Century: Enlightenment, Lumières, Aufklärung* (Springer, 2013), in *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism* 6:4 (2016), 405-411.
- R7** Review of Peter Anstey, *John Locke and Natural Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), in *Review of Metaphysics* 67:2 (December 2013), 423-25.
- R6** Review of John Christian Laursen and María José Villaverde (eds.), *Paradoxes of Religious Toleration in Early Modern Political Thought* (Lexington Books, 2012), in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2013.05.22 (online).
- R5** Review of José Maia Neto, Gianni Paganini, John Christian Laursen (eds), *Skepticism in the Modern Age: Building on the Work of Richard Popkin* (Brill, 2009), in *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism* 3:4 (2013), 304-307.
- R4** Review of Neven Leddy, Avi S. Lifschitz (eds.), *Epicurus in the Enlightenment* (Voltaire Foundation, 2009), in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2010.06.34 (sic; online).
- R3** Review of Gianni Paganini, *Skepsis: Le débat des modernes sur le scepticisme* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2008). *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 18:1 (January 2010).
- R2** Review of Daniel Dahlstrom, *Philosophical Legacies: Essays on the Thought of Kant, Hegel and Their Contemporaries* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008). *The Review of Metaphysics* vol. LXII, no. 3 (March 2009).
- R1** Review of William Sweet, *Religious Belief: The Contemporary Debate* (Koramangala: Dharmaram Publications, 2003). *Philosophy, Culture, and Traditions*, 3 (2005).

Selected Talks

- T25** “Why Do Sceptics Bother with Philosophy? The Case of Pierre Bayle.” *Early Moderns on the Power of Philosophy Workshop*. University College Dublin. October 12-14, 2022.
- T24** “Pierre Bayle and the Persecutor’s Mind.” Keynote address. *Enlightenment and Christianity in the Works of Bayle and Feijoo*. University of Oviedo, Spain. Online conference. May 19, 2021.
- T23** “Bayle, Locke, and the Philosophical Foundations of Western Secularism.” Invited talk to given at the University of Toronto on May 4, 2018.
- T22** “Secularism and Toleration in Bayle and Locke.” Invited talk given at the John Locke Workshop at Western University on June 23, 2017.
- T21** “Pierre Bayle and Secularization of Conscience.” Invited talk given to the Modern Philosophy Research Group at Western University, October 29, 2015.
- T20** “Bayle and Emergence of the Enlightenment Conscience.” Peer-reviewed presentation given at the Congress for the *International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies* at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, Netherlands, July 27, 2015.
- T19** “Varieties of Academic Skepticism in Early Modern Philosophy.” Peer-reviewed presentation given at the *Canadian Philosophical Association Congress*, University of Ottawa, June 4, 2015.
- T18** “Skepticism and Cartesian Evidence: The Academic Objections of Huet and Foucher.” Invited talk given at the *Table ronde en philosophie moderne de Montréal*, Université du Québec à Montréal, March 20, 2015.

- T17** “Disagreement and Academic Skepticism in Bayle.” Given as part of a peer-reviewed symposium on Academic skepticism at the *Canadian Philosophical Congress*, University of Victoria, June 6, 2013.
- T16** “Belief and Disagreement: The Bayle/Le Clerc/ Leibniz Debate.” Invited talk given at the Université de Paris I—Panthéon-Sorbonne, September 5, 2012.
- T15** “A Brief History of the Problem of Evil.” Invited talk given at Santa Clara University, January 20, 2012.
- T14** “Theodicy and Toleration in Bayle’s *Dictionary*.” Invited talk given at the University of Notre Dame, December 12, 2010.
- T13** “Conscientious Refusals without Conscience.” Invited talk given at the University of Western Ontario, November 13, 2010.
- T12** “Bayle’s Cartesian Argument for Toleration.” Invited talk given at Santa Clara University, February 22, 2010.
- T11** “Solomon’s Cipher: Bayle’s Last Argument for Toleration.” Invited talk given at the University of Manitoba, October 30, 2009.
- T10** “Who were Bayle’s *Maxime* and *Themiste*?” Peer-reviewed talk given at the *Canadian Philosophical Association Congress*, Carleton University, May, 2009.
- T9** “Qui étaient Maxime et Themiste? Scepticisme, religion, et tolérance chez Pierre Bayle.” Peer-reviewed talk given at the *77è Congrès de l’Acfas*, University of Ottawa, May, 2009.
- T8** “The Impossible Supposition: An Alternative History of Autonomy.” Invited talk for the *Philosophy Graduate Student Colloquium Series*, University of Western Ontario, September, 2008.
- T7** “Fénelon and Malebranche on the Impossible Supposition.” Peer-reviewed talk given at the *17th European Conference on the Philosophy of Religion*, University of Oslo, Norway, August, 2008.
- T6** “The Moral Certainty of Immortality in Descartes.” Peer-reviewed talk given at the *Canadian Philosophical Association Congress*, University of British Columbia, June, 2008.
- T5** Commentary on Amanda Gibeault, “Bayle and the Possibility of Subversion.” *Canadian Philosophical Association Congress*, University of British Columbia, June, 2008.
- T4** “Atheism and Secularism in Bayle.” Invited talk for the conference, *Sacred and Secular in a Global Canada*, Huron University College, May, 2008.
- T3** Commentary on Richard Booher, “Kant on the Duty of Perfection.” *UWO Graduate Conference on the History of Philosophy*, University of Western Ontario, March, 2008.
- T2** “The Stoic Descartes.” Peer-reviewed talk given at the *Essays of Significance Graduate Conference*, University of Windsor, March, 2008.
- T1** “Early Modern Quietism.” Peer-reviewed talk given at the *Repetition and Return Graduate Conference*, University of Western Ontario, March, 2008.

Grants and Fellowships

2017. *Trent University Centre for Teaching and Learning* Teaching Fellowship for 2017-2020 for the project “Teaching the News: A Case-Based Approach to Applied Ethics Teaching.” \$6,000.

2016. Grant from the *École Normale Supérieure de Lyon* to participate in the Junior Scholars Research School devoted to “*Historiographie de la philosophie: histoire, méthodes, pratiques.*” \$1,000.

2015: *SSHRC International Travel Grant.* Trent University. \$1,500.

2010-2013: *Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR)* grant for “Let Conscience Be Their Guide? Conscientious Refusals in Reproductive Health Care.” \$240,000. Along with Carolyn McLeod (principal investigator), Jocelyn Downie, Francoise Baylis, and Daniel Weinstock, I was a co-investigator in a research project that studied the moral, legal, and policy issues surrounding conscientious refusals by health care professionals in Canada.

2012: *Santa Clara University Faculty Summer Research Grant.* \$5,000.

2010: *Templeton Research Fellowship in Early Modern Philosophy of Religion.* University of Notre Dame. \$50,000. I was one of three research fellows chosen for the “Problem of Evil in Early Modern Philosophy” project.

2010: *SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship* for “Pierre Bayle and Academic Skepticism.” \$82,000. Declined.

Awards

2024: Nominated for the Symons Award for Teaching Excellence (Trent)

2023: Nominated for the Humanities/Social Sciences Decanal Teaching Award (Trent)

2023: Nominated for the Symons Award for Teaching Excellence (Trent)

2022: Nominated for the Humanities/Social Sciences Decanal Teaching Award (Trent)

2022: Nominated for the Symons Award for Teaching Excellence (Trent)

2021: Nominated for the Symons Award for Teaching Excellence (Trent)

2020: Nominated for the Symons Award for Teaching Excellence (Trent)

2020: Nominated for Award for Excellence in Online Teaching (Trent)

2020: Nominated to deliver The Last Lecture (Trent)

2016: Mil Clark Award for Faculty Engagement in College Life, Lady Eaton College (Trent)

2012: Elected Faculty Scholar, Markkula Center for Applied Ethics (Santa Clara University)

2009: Graduate Student Teaching Award (Western)

2009: Ontario Graduate Scholarship (declined)

2007: Faculty of Graduate Studies Entrance Award (Western)

2004-2006: Johannes Quasten Graduate Scholarship (CUA)

2002-2004: Logic and Computation Doctoral Scholarship (Carnegie Mellon)

2002: Ontario Graduate Scholarship (declined)

2002: Faculty of Arts Graduating Gold Medal (Western)
2002: Philosophy Department Graduating Gold Medal (Western)
2002: Gold medal, Moot Court Law Competition (Western)
2001: Allison Johnson Philosophy Scholarship (Western)
2001: Rose Gomberg Philosophy Scholarship (Western)
2001: Faculty Association Scholarship (Western)
2001: Alumni Association Scholarship (Western)
1998: Faculty of Mathematics René Descartes Entrance Award (Waterloo). Declined.

Recent Teaching

At Trent University

PHIL 4610H: The History of Skepticism
PHIL 4610H: Pierre Bayle on Religion and Politics
PHIL 4390H: Advanced Topics in Biomedical Ethics
PHIL 4210H: Science Deniers, Skeptics, and Conspiracy Theorists
PHIL 3430H: Early Modern Philosophy II: The 18th Century Enlightenment
PHIL 3420H: Early Modern Philosophy I: Reason and Revolution
PHIL 3370H: Cyberethics
PHIL 3030H: The Meaning of Life
PHIL-COIS 2410H: Formal Logic
PHIL 2390H: Biomedical Ethics
PHIL 2030H: Death
PHIL 1200H: Critical Thinking
PHIL 1000H: Introduction to Philosophy—Knowledge and Reality

Graduate Supervision

2015-2017: Brendan Rowe, M.A. in Applied Modelling and Quantitative Methods. Thesis title: “An Ethical Analysis of Bell’s Targeted Ads Program.” Successfully defended in May, 2017.