

Ryan Simonelli

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Philosophy,
1115 E. 58th St.
Chicago, IL 60637

(401) 714-3570
simonelli@uchicago.edu
ryansimonelli.com

Employment:

University of Chicago. 2022-present.
Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in the Humanities.

Education:

University of Chicago. PhD, Philosophy. 2015-2022.
University of Pittsburgh. Visiting Scholar. Fall 2019.
New College of Florida. BA, Philosophy. 2010-2014.
Oxford University. Visiting Student. Winter 2013.

Areas of Specialty:

Philosophy of Language, Metaphysics, Philosophical Logic

Areas of Competence:

Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology, History of Analytic Philosophy, Indian Philosophy

Publications (preprints available at ryansimonelli.com/papers):

"How to be a Hyper-Inferentialist." *Synthese*. 2023. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-023-04382-1>

"Why Must Incompatibility Be Symmetric?" *Philosophical Quarterly*. 2023.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pq/pqad078>

"Sellars's Two Worlds." In *Reading Kant with Sellars*, ed. M. Rane and L. C. Seiberth.
Routledge. Forthcoming.

"Considering the Exceptions: On the Failure of Cumulative Transitivity for Indicative Conditionals." *Synthese*. 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-022-03854-0>

"Sellars's Ontological Nominalism." *European Journal of Philosophy*. 2021.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12729>

"The Normative/Agentive Correspondence." *Journal of Transcendental Philosophy* 3, no. 1. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jtph-2019-0021>

"Pointing Out the Skeptic's Mistake." *Florida Philosophical Review* Volume 9, Issue 1. 2014.

"Reformulating the Two Aspects of Justification." *Florida Philosophical Review*. Volume 8, Issue 1. 2013.

Papers Under Review (available at ryansimonelli.com/papers):

“A General Schema for Bilateral Proof Rules” (revise and resubmit at *Journal of Philosophical Logic*)

“Can the Content of Perception be Conceptual?” (revise and resubmit at *European Journal of Philosophy*)

“Bringing Bilateralisms Together”

Papers in Progress (drafts available upon request):

“An Act-Based Theory of Assertibles and Instantiables”

“Properties without Problems”

“Against Conceptual Svabhāva”

Dissertation:

Meaning and the World (available at ryansimonelli.com/dissertation)

I motivate and develop a use-based semantic theory in opposition to the dominant paradigm in philosophical and linguistic semantics. Drawing inspiration from Wilfrid Sellars, I argue that contemporary semantic theories are faced with a basic problem of explanatory circularity. These theories universally presuppose that worldly knowledge of such things as properties or sets of possible worlds precedes and underlies knowledge of meaning. I argue, however, that it is only through learning a language—mastering the rules governing the use of the expressions belonging to that language—that knowledge of these worldly entities is possible. In response to this fundamental problem, I develop a formal semantic framework in which the meaning of a sentence is understood directly in terms of its role in discourse. In contrast to existing semantic frameworks, this framework does not presuppose speakers’ worldly knowledge, and so is actually able to explain it. The result is not just a new kind of semantic theory, but a new conception of the relation between meaning and the world.

Committee: Michael Kremer (co-chair), Malte Willer (co-chair), James Conant, Robert Brandom, Jason Bridges

Presentations (“*” indicates refereed presentation):

“An Act-Based Theory of Assertibles and Instantiables.” November 2023. University of Potsdam Colloquium in Theoretical Philosophy (invited by Johannes Haag). (virtual)

“The Meaning(s) of the Classical Connectives.” October 2023. The Theoretical Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

*“A General Schema for Bilateral Proof Rules.” June 2023. The 36th Annual Logica Conference. Teplá Monastery, Czech Republic.

"Consequence, Coherence, and Consequence Again: Rethinking the Philosophical Significance of the (Classical) Sequent Calculus." May 2023. Retirement conference for Michael Kremer. University of Chicago.

"Sellars's Two Worlds." December 2022. The International Sellars Colloquium. Virtual.

"Sellars's Two Worlds." February 2022. The German Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

"Simply Substructural Semantics." November 2021. Graduate Student Research Symposium. University of Chicago.

"Sellars's Ontological Nominalism." June 2021. The International Sellars Colloquium. Virtual.

"Sellars's Ontological Nominalism." November 2020. The Theoretical Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

*"Can the Content of Perception Be Conceptual?" June 2019. The Significance of Self-Consciousness – A Workshop with Mathew Boyle. Leipzig University.

"Frege and the Logical Notion of Judgment." April 2019. The German Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

"Discursive Role Semantics." February 2019. The Theoretical Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

*"Discursive Normativity, Agentive Modality, and Perceptual Knowledge." February 2019. Themes from the Philosophy of Robert Brandom. Marquette University.

"Propositions and the Power to Represent." December 2017. The Linguistics and Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

"The Skeptical Thought and Its Dissolution." October 2017. The Wittgenstein Workshop. University of Chicago.

*"Propositional Acts and Opaque Contexts." July 2017. Logic and Life – A Workshop with Irad Kimhi. Leipzig University.

"Indexicality, Opacity, and Perspectivalty." March 2017. The Linguistics and Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

*"Truth and Being in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*." July 2016. The Activity of Being – A Workshop with Aryeh Kosman. Leipzig University.

"Comments on Markus Gabriel's 'The Meaning of "Existence" and the Contingency of Sense'." April 2016. Contemporary European Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

"Having Knowledge in Experience." April 2016. German Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago.

*“How to Tell the Skeptic to Get Lost.” November 2013. The Florida Philosophical Association Conference. Stetson University.

*“Reformulating the Two Aspects of Justification.” November 2012. The Florida Philosophical Association Conference. University of Central Florida.

Interviews:

“Inferentialism.” *Elucidations Podcast*. To be released.

“A Conversation with Ryan Simonelli.” Interview conducted by L. Ralon. *Figure/Ground*, March 4, 2022: figureground.org/a-conversation-with-ryan-simonelli.

Honors and Awards:

Nominated by the University of Chicago Philosophy Department for the Dean’s Dissertation Award (2022)

University of Chicago Graduate Student Essay Prize in Philosophy (for “Considering the Exceptions”) (2021)

The Hanna Holborn Gray Dissertation Completion Fellowship (2021)
Awarded to One Student in the Humanities Division at the University of Chicago Each Year

University of Chicago Graduate Fellowship (2015-2020)

The Gerrit and Edith Schipper Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Philosophy Paper in a Four-Year College or University (2012 and 2013)

New College of Florida Merit Scholarship (2010-2014)

Teaching:

As Primary Instructor (syllabi and more available at ryansimonelli.com/teaching):

Appearance and Reality: Perspectives Across Philosophical Traditions. University of Chicago. Spring 2024 (prospective).

Introduction to Logic. University of Chicago. Winter 2023 (prospective).

Doing Things with Words: A Venture into Speech Act Theory. University of Chicago. Winter 2023.

Philosophical Perspectives II. University of Chicago (Core curriculum). Winter 2023. Winter 2024 (prospective)

Science Fiction and Philosophy. University of Chicago. Fall 2022.

Philosophical Perspectives I. University of Chicago (Core curriculum). Fall 2022. Fall 2023.

Consciousness and Language. University of Chicago. Spring 2020.

As Course Assistant:

Elementary Logic (Michael Kremer). University of Chicago. Winter 2021.

Philosophy of Religion (Ben Callard). University of Chicago. Winter 2021.

Varieties of Philosophical Skepticism (James Conant). University of Chicago. Spring 2019.

Consciousness (David Finkelstein). University of Chicago. Fall 2018.

Cognition (Jason Bridges and Chris Kennedy). University of Chicago. Spring 2018.

Formal Logic (Aron Edidin). New College of Florida. Fall 2013.

Research Groups:

Research on Logical Expressivism (ROLE), a weekly research group focused on the development substructural logics in the theoretical framework of inferentialism and logical expressivism, led by Robert Brandom and Ulf Hlobil, (2019-Present). (logicalexpressivism.wixsite.com/role)

The *International Sellars Colloquium*, a monthly reasearch group focused on the philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars, (2021-Present). (wilfridsellars.org/isc)

Professional Service:

Referee:

Erkenntnis, *The Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy* (× 2), *Open Philosophy*, *Theoria*

Conference Co-Organizer:

Skepticism as a Form of Philosophical Experience, with James Conant, Jason Bridges, and Rico Gutschmidt. University of Chicago. February 2017.

Concepts of Aesthetic Form, with James Conant, Robert Pippin, and David Wellbery. University of Chicago. January 2017.

Research Assistant:

Editorial Assistant for *Engaging Putnam*, with James Conant and Sanjit Chakraborty. De Gruyter: 2022.

Manuscript preparation and indexing for *Belief, Inference, and the Self-Conscious Mind*, Eric Marcus. Oxford University Press: 2021.

Manuscript preparation, indexing, and editorial assistant for *The Logical Alien*, James Conant and Sofia Miguens. Harvard University Press: 2020.

Graduate Coursework (“*” indicates audit):

What’s Given to Perceptual Experience? (David Finkelstein)
Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Investigations (Jason Bridges)
Introduction to Metaphysics: Existence, Truth, Activity (Irad Kimhi)
Intermediate Logic (Anubav Vasudaven)
Philosophy of Barry Stroud (James Conant and Jason Bridges)
Philosophical Revolutions in the Concept of Form (James Conant, Robert Pippin, and David Wellbery)
Indexicals (Malte Willer)
Philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars (Michael Kremer)
Aristotle’s *De Anima* (Sean Kelsey, visiting from Notre Dame)
Advanced Logic (Kevin Davey)
Naturalism (Jason Bridges)
Problems of the Self (Matthew Boyle)
Heidegger’s “Letter on Humanism”* (Irad Kimhi)
Constituitivism (Matthias Haase)
Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (Matthew Boyle)
Potentiality and Actuality: Aristotle’s *Metaphysics-Θ* (Christopher Shields, visiting from Notre Dame)
Semantics and Pragmatics 2: Pragmatics* (Chris Kennedy)
Topics in Semantics and Pragmatics: Implicature* (Chris Kennedy)
Varieties of Philosophical Skepticism* (James Conant)
The Analytic Tradition: From Frege to Ryle* (James Conant)
Conceptions of the Limits of Logic from Descartes to Wittgenstein* (James Conant)
Consciousness and Memory* (David Finkelstein)
Wilfrid Sellars* (Robert Brandom, while visiting at Pittsburgh)
Metaontology* (J. Dmitri Gallow, while visiting at Pittsburgh)
Further Topics in Logic: Quantification* (Kevin Davey)
Philosophical Traditions in Indian Buddhist Thought* (Dan Arnold)
Properties, Relations, and Propositions* (Jeff Speaks and Daniel Nolan, at Notre Dame)

Special Seminars:

Robert Brandom’s “A Spirit of Trust” Mini Graduate Seminar, Leipzig University.
Summer 2016.
Aryeh Kosman’s “The Activity of Being” Mini Graduate Seminar, University of Chicago.
Fall 2015.
“Justice.” Summer Seminar in Philosophy at the University of Colorado, Boulder.
Summer 2013.

Popular Philosophy:

Talking in Circles: Serious Philosophical Dialogues on the Silliness of Philosophy. An illustrated book of dialogues about overarching philosophical systems that undermine themselves. Self-Published in 2014 ([link](#)).

“Absolute Irony” (www.ryansimonelli.com/absolute-irony), a blog where I post about philosophy and related fields for a non-academic audience (2014-present).

2nd Place Winner of the 3 Quarks Daily Philosophy Prize, Judged by Huw Price (2014).

“Seeing Red, Working Nine to Five, and Wearing Platform Shoes.” An article about Frank Jackson’s Knowledge argument in *The Sophist*, a philosophy magazine organized by Oxford University students (2013).

“The Do-Be Tune.” A short philosophical dialogue published in the New College Academic/Literary Journal *Nude Collage* (2011).

References:

Robert Brandom
University of Pittsburgh
brandom@pitt.edu

James Conant
University of Chicago
jconant@uchicago.edu

Michael Kremer
University of Chicago
kremer@uchicago.edu

Malte Willer
University of Chicago
willer@uchicago.edu

David Finkelstein (teaching)
University of Chicago
davidf.uchicago@gmail.com