

Sam Cowling

Department of Philosophy, Denison University, Granville, OH 43023, USA
cowlings@denison.edu | <http://personal.denison.edu/~cowlings/> | Updated: April 13th, 2024

Employment

Nancy E. Brickman & Ellenor Shannon Professor, 2024-present
Professor, Denison University, 2024-present
Associate Professor, Denison University, 2018-present
Assistant Professor, Denison University, 2013-2018
Visiting Assistant Professor, Western Michigan University, 2011-2013

Education

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2011
Dissertation: *Identity and the Limits of Possibility*
Advisor: Phillip Bricker
M.A., Philosophy, University of Manitoba, 2005
Thesis: *Neither Simples nor Gunk*
Advisor: Ben Caplan
B.A., Philosophy, University of Victoria, 2004

Areas of Research Specialization

Metaphysics, Philosophy of Comics

Areas of Teaching Competence

Philosophy of Science, Logic

Books

Philosophy of Comics: An Introduction, with Wesley D. Cray (2022) Bloomsbury.
Abstract Entities (2017) Routledge.

Articles

"Omnipresence and Mathematical Reality" with Ley David Eliette Cray (forthcoming)
Oxford Handbook of Omnipresence (eds. Anna Marmodoro, Damiano Migliorini, & Ben Page).
"Portraits as Parts of Comics" (forthcoming) *Epic & Iconic: Essays on the Comics of Alex Ross*.
"Speech Balloons" (forthcoming) *Bloomsbury Contemporary Aesthetics*.
"Hume's Razor" (forthcoming) *Philosophical Methodology after Carnap* (ed. Darren Bradley).
"Self Defense for Superheroes in *The Hawk and the Dove*" (2024) *BOOM! Splat! Comics and Violence* (eds. Jim Coby & Joanna Davis-McElligatt).

- "Are Properties Abstract Entities?" (2024) *Routledge Handbook on Properties* (eds. Anna-Sofia Maurin and Anthony Fisher) Routledge: 72-81.
- "Recombining Non-Qualitative Reality" (2021) *Synthese* 198: 2273-2295
- "Rethinking Racial Ontology through McDuffie's *Deathlok*" (2020) *Inks: Journal of the Comics Studies Society* 4.2: 179-198.
- "Ideology and Ontology" (2020) *Routledge Handbook of Metametaphysics* (eds. Ricki Bliss & James Miller) Routledge: 376-386.
- "Naturalism and Non-Qualitative Properties" (2020) *Common Sense Metaphysics: Themes from the Philosophy of Lynne Rudder Baker* (eds. Luis Oliveira & Kevin Corcoran) Routledge: 209-238.
- "Universals" (2019) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- "Prioritizing Platonism" with Kelly Trogdon (2019) *Philosophical Studies* 176: 2029-2042.
- "The Explanatory Value of Mathematical Information in Everyday Explanations" with Seth Chin-Parker and May Mei (2019) In A. Goel, C. Seifert, & C. Freksa (eds.), *Proceedings of the 41st Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
- "Resemblance" (2017) *Philosophy Compass* 12.4: 1-11.
- "Conceivability Arguments for Haecceitism" (2017) *Synthese* 194: 4171-4190
- "How to be Omnipresent" with Wesley D. Cray (2017) *American Philosophical Quarterly* 154: 223-234.
- "Intrinsic Properties of Properties" (2017) *Philosophical Quarterly* 67: 241-262.
- "Haecceitism" (2015; updated 2022) *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- "Advice for Eleatics" (2015) *Palgrave Handbook of Philosophical Methods* (ed. Christopher Daly) Palgrave MacMillan: 306-330.
- "Non-Qualitative Properties" (2015) *Erkenntnis* 80: 275-301.
- "No Simples, No Gunk, No Nothing" (2014) *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 95: 246-260.
- "The Way of Actuality" (2014) *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 92: 231-247.
- "Instantiation as Location" (2014) *Philosophical Studies* 167: 667-682.
- "The Modal View of Essence" (2013) *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 43: 248-266.
- "Ideological Parsimony" (2013) *Synthese* 190: 889-908.
- "Haecceitism for Modal Realists" (2012) *Erkenntnis* 77: 399-417.
- "The Limits of Modality" (2011) *Philosophical Quarterly* 61: 473-495.
- "Kantian Humility and Ontological Categories" (2010) *Analysis* 70: 659-665.
- "Could Batman Have Been the Joker?" with Chris Ragg (2008) *Batman and Philosophy* (eds. Mark D. White and Robert Arp) Wiley-Blackwell: 142-155.

Book Reviews

The Comics Form by Chris Gavalier, *ImageText* (2024) 14(3).

- Aesthetics: 50 Puzzles, Paradoxes, and Thought Experiments* by Michel-Antoine Xhignesse, *Metascience* (2023) 32(3): 395-397.
- Essence and Existence* by Bob Hale, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2022).
- Comics and the Origins of Manga* by Eike Exner, *International Journal of Comic Art* (2022).
- Ontology without Borders* by Jody Azzouni, *Mind* (2021) 130.517: 338-351.
- Graphic Novels as Philosophy* by Jeff McLaughlin, *International Journal of Comic Art* (2020) 22.1: 502-505.
- Superhero Thought Experiments: Comic Book Philosophy* by Chris Gavalier and Nathan Goldberg, *Teaching Philosophy* (2020) 43.1: 98-102.
- Ontology and the Ambitions of Metaphysics* by Thomas Hofweber, *Philosophical Quarterly* (2018) 68.271: 403-406.
- Time: A Philosophical Introduction* by James Harrington, *Teaching Philosophy* (2016) 39: 536-540.
- God and Necessity* by Brian Leftow, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (2013) 91: 610-613.
- The Reburial of Nonexistents* by Carolyn Swanson, *Philosophy in Review* (2012) 32: 431-4.
- New Essays on Singular Thought* by Robin Jeshion, *Philosophy in Review* (2011) 36: 434-7.
- New Essays on the Knowability Paradox* by Joe Salerno, *Philosophy in Review* (2010) 30: 220-2.
- Possibility* by Michael Jubien, *Philosophy in Review* (2010) 30: 47-49.
- The Metaphysics of Hyperspace* by Hud Hudson, *Philosophy in Review* (2009) 29: 41-3.

Works in Progress

- “Nominalism in Metaphysics” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Editor, Special Issue of *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* “The Philosophy of Comics”

Presentations

- Book Symposium, *Philosophy of Comics*, Canadian Philosophical Association, 2024
- Book Symposium, *Philosophy of Comics*, Eastern APA, 2024
- “The Paradox of Pleasure and the Perils of Reprints,” International Bande Dessinée Society, University of Cambridge, 2023
- Book Symposium, *Philosophy of Comics*, American Society for Aesthetics, Rocky Mountain Division, 2023
- “Spider-Minimalism: Simplification in Sal Buscema’s *Spectacular Spider-Man*” *Spider-Man in Popular Culture*, Bowling Green, 2023
- “When Can We Recolor Comics?” Comics Studies Society, Lansing, 2022
- “Comics, Characters, and Fictional Ontology” International Colloquium on the Metaphysics and the Semantics of Fiction, 2022

- "Properties and the Abstract-Concrete Distinction" *Routledge Handbook of Properties* Conference, 2022
- "Perspectival Haecceitism" Colloquium in Analytic Metaphysics, Santiago, Chile, 2021
- "Me, You, and You as Me: Understanding Conceivability Arguments for Haecceitism" with Seth Chin-Parker and Shaun Nichols, Society for Philosophy and Psychology, 2021
- "Perspectival Haecceitism" with Seth Chin-Parker, Workshop on Identity & Individuation, St. Andrews, 2021
- "When Can We Recolor Comics?" Comics Arts Conference, Anaheim, 2020
- *"When Can We Recolor Comics?" International Comics Art Forum, 2021
- **"Comics in the Philosophy Classroom" American Association of Philosophy Teachers Conference, 2020
- *"When Can We Recolor Comics?" Canadian Society for the Study of Comics, 2020
- *"When Can We Recolor Comics?" CPA, 2020
- "Humeanism and Other Theoretical Virtues" UMass Homecoming Conference, 2019
- Author meets Critics Session on *Abstract Entities*, Pacific APA, 2019
- "How to Horrify Batman" Batman in Popular Culture Conference, Bowling Green State University, 2019
- "Fictional Realism in the Funny Pages" Texas Christian University, 2018
- "Fictional Realism in the Funny Pages" Denison University, 2018
- "What Makes Platonists Tick?" with Seth Chin-Parker and May Mei, Middlebury College, Explanation Across the Disciplines, 2018
- "What Do Speech Balloons Depict?" Language, Culture, and Mind Conference, 2018
- "How to Benacerraf a Goodman-Lewis" Tilburg University, History of Analytic Philosophy Workshop, 2018
- "Fictional Realism in the Funny Pages" CPA, 2018
- "Some Problems with Pythagoreanism" Early Career Metaphysics Workshop, William & Mary, 2018
- "Recombining Non-Qualitative Reality" Lingnan University, Hong Kong, 2017
- "Recombining Non-Qualitative Reality" Hong Kong University, Hong Kong, 2017
- "Recombining Non-Qualitative Reality" Midwestern Annual Workshop in Metaphysics, Wisconsin-Madison, 2017
- "Some Problems with Pythagoreanism" Lawrence University, 2017
- "How to Benacerraf a Goodman-Lewis" SPAWN, Syracuse, 2017
- "How to Benacerraf a Goodman-Lewis" Eastern APA, 2017
- "How to Benacerraf a Goodman-Lewis" Virginia Tech, 2016
- "Recombining Non-Qualitative Reality" Haecceitism and Individuals, Neuchatel, 2016

- "Prioritizing Platonism" (with Kelly Trogdon) CPA, 2016
- "Prioritizing Platonism" (with Kelly Trogdon) Monism, Jean Nicod, Paris, 2016
- "Intrinsic Properties of Properties" Ohio State, 2016
- "How to Benacerraf a Goodman-Lewis" Ohio Philosophical Association, 2016
- "On Abstract Entities" Texas Christian University, Junior Metaphysics Workshop, 2016
- "Intrinsic Properties of Properties" Central APA, 2016
- "Conceivability Arguments for Haecceitism" Issues on the Impossible III, Bratislava, 2015
- "Nominalist Possibilism" CPA, 2015
- "Intrinsic Properties of Properties" Metaphysics of Quantity, NYU, 2015
- "Intrinsic Properties of Properties" SEP Meeting, 2015
- "Advice for Eleatics" Central APA, 2015
- "Intrinsic Properties of Properties" Metaphysics and Philosophy of Physics, Rochester, 2014
- "Conceivability Arguments for Haecceitism" CPA, 2014
- "Recombination under the Spotlight" Washington & Jefferson University, 2014
- "Eternalist Recurrence" Ohio Philosophical Association, 2014
- "Eternalist Recurrence" Pacific APA, 2014
- "The Way of Actuality" Central APA, 2014
- "Conceivability Arguments for Haecceitism" Western Michigan, Junior Metaphysics Workshop, 2013
- "Advice for Eleatics" UMass Homecoming Conference, 2013
- "Eternalist Recurrence" Washington & Jefferson University, Pittsburgh Area Philosophy Colloquium, 2013
- "Instantiation as Location" Western Michigan 2013
- "No Simples, No Gunk, No Nothing" CPA, 2013
- "The Way of Actuality" CPA, 2013
- "Instantiation as Location" Kansas University, 2013
- "Instantiation as Location" Denison University, 2013
- "Instantiation as Location" Central APA, 2012
- "Nominalist Possibilism" Western Michigan University, 2012
- "Instantiation as Location" SEP Meeting, 2012
- "Pathology and Possibility" Siena Heights University, 2012
- "Instantiation as Location" Syracuse Graduate Conference, 2011
- "Instantiation as Location" CPA, 2011
- "A Puzzle about Plenitude" Western Michigan University, 2011

"Kantian Humility and Ontological Categories" Syracuse Graduate Conference, 2010

"Kant on Simple Substance" CPA, 2010

"The Limits of Modality" CPA, 2007

"The Limits of Modality" Harvard-MIT Graduate Conference, 2007

"Hypergunk and Inaccessible Fictionalism" CPA, 2006

"No Simples, No Gunk, No Nothing" Brown Graduate Conference, 2006

"Hypergunk and Inaccessible Fictionalism" WCPA, 2005

"Platonism and Aristotelianism in the Philosophy of Mathematics" WCPA, 2004

'*' indicates conference cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic

Comments

De Cruz's *Philosophy Illustrated*, Pacific APA, 2024

Wallace and Bowers' "The Possibilities Aren't Endless If You Have a Life" Pacific APA, 2023

McDaniel's "Kantian Metaontology" UMass Homecoming, 2022

Tierney & Latham's "The Four-Case Argument" Eastern APA, 2022 (with Seth Chin-Parker)

Segal's "Pythagoreanism: A Number of Theories" SMS, 2018

Leonard's "What is it to be Located?" Central APA, 2018

Gibbs' "Advanced Modalizing for the Modal Realist" Pacific APA, 2017

Dershowitz's "Nihilism and Gunk" CPA, 2016

Gibilisco's "No Paradox for Multi-Located Universals" Pacific APA, 2016

Glick's "Spatiotemporal Entanglement" Junior Metaphysics Workshop, 2015

Eddon's "Parthood and Naturalness" BSPC, 2014

Dumsday's "A Cosmological Argument for Moderate Realism" CPA, 2014

Wallace's "A Defense of Modal Parts" Pacific APA, 2014

Garland's "Against Superinternalism" WCPA, 2013

Jorgensen's "Chancy Counterfactuals" Indiana Philosophical Association, 2012

MacLean's "Armstrong's Theory of Probabilistic Laws" CPA, 2011

MacKay's "Conditionals, Mood, and Binding" CPA, 2010

Wang's "The Dice Problem" Central APA, 2010

Lim's "Baker, Animalism, and Mental Capacities" Lynne Baker Conference, Buffalo, 2009

Haukioja's "Rigidity or Actuality-Dependence?" Pacific APA, 2009

Giberman's "Against Zero-Dimensional Objects" UMass Graduate Conference, 2009

Samaroo's "Geometric Primitives as Implicit Definitions" CPA, 2007

Maclean's "Mumford's Problem for Scientific Essentialism" CPA, 2006

Conter's "An Abstract Object Located in Time" CPA, 2005

Dieveney's "A Stronger Indispensability" WCPA, 2004

Awards & Fellowships

Brickman-Shannon Professor, Denison University, 2024-present

Denison University Research Foundation Fellowship, 2024

John and Christine Warner Chair, Denison University 2019-2022

R.C. Good Fellowship, Denison University, 2020

Co-Recipient, APA Small Grant for Junior Metaphysics Workshop Project, 2014-2015

Arts & Sciences Discovery and Research Award, Western Michigan University, 2013

Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2010-2011

Travel Grant, Metaphysical Mayhem, Rutgers University, 2010

Robison Prize for Excellence in Teaching, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2010

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Doctoral Fellowship, 2006-2010

Puryear Fellowship, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2006-2007

Cartwright Fellowship, University of Manitoba, 2004-2005

Courses Taught ("*" indicates graduate course)

Abstract Objects (Western Michigan 2012)*

American Philosophy (UMass 2009, 2010; Western Michigan 2012)

Biomedical Ethics (Manitoba 2006, 2007)

Critical Thinking (Manitoba 2006, 2009; Western Michigan 2011, 2012, 2013)

David Lewis (Denison 2015)

Environmental Ethics (Manitoba 2008, 2010)

Ethics of Data (Denison 2021)

Foundations of Quantitative Reasoning (Denison 2022)

Greek and Medieval Philosophy (Denison 2021)

History of Analytic Philosophy (Denison 2013, 2017)

Imagination and Impossibility (Denison 2014)

Introduction to Philosophy (Denison 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018)

Logic (Denison 2016, 2018, 2021, 2023)

Metaphysics (Denison 2014)
 Modality (Western Michigan 2011)*
 Nothing (Denison 2016)
 Nietzsche (UMass 2010)
 Persons, Time, and Freedom (Western Michigan 2012)
 Philosophy of Art (Denison 2023)
 Philosophy of Language (Denison 2017)
 Philosophy of Mathematics (Denison 2017, co-taught with May Mei)
 Philosophy of Mind (Denison 2016)
 Philosophy through Comics (Western Michigan 2013, Denison 2018, 2020, 2024)
 Philosophy of Science (Denison 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022)
 What If? How to Think about What Didn't Happen (Denison 2021)
 Directed Studies: Persons (Western Michigan 2012)*, Physicalism (Western Michigan 2012)*, Death (Western Michigan 2013)*, Set Theory (Western Michigan 2013)*, Philosophy in Comics (Denison 2018), Philosophy of Fiction (Summer Research, Denison 2018), Philosophy of Saul Kripke (Denison 2018), The Philosophy of Western Comics (Summer Research, Denison 2019), Genre and Style in Comics (Summer Research, Denison 2022), Contemporary Metaphysics (2022)

Academic Service

Chair of the Faculty, Denison University, 2023-2024
 President's Advisory Board, Denison University, 2023-present
 Chair, Department of Philosophy, Denison University, 2021-present
 Organizer, PHIL COMIC CON (Philosophy of Comics Conference), 2023
 Chair-elect of the Faculty, Denison University, 2022-2023
 Chair, Academic Affairs Council, Denison University, 2021-2022
 Chair, Senior Administrator Review Committee, Denison University, 2022-2023
 Area Editor, *Ergo*, 2019-2022
 Editorial Board, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 2016-present
 Board Member, American Philosophical Association, 2020-2023
 Chair, APA Academic Career Opportunities and Placement, 2020-2023
 Program Committee, Eastern APA, 2022-2023
 University Honor Committee, Denison University, 2016-2022
 APA Committee Member, Academic Career Opportunities and Placement, 2015-2023

CPA Conference Program Committee Member, 2013-2020

Faculty Advisor to *Episteme* (Undergraduate Philosophy Journal), Denison 2013-2019

Academic Affairs Council, Denison University, 2017-2019, 2020-2023

Organizer, *Teaching Thinking: Logic & the Liberal Arts* Conference, Denison University, 2017

CPA Conference Program Chair, 2015-2016

PhilPapers Category Editor: Abstract Objects, Haecceitism

General Education Competency Committee, Denison University, 2016

Symposium Organizer: "Platonism, Physicalism, and Fundamentality" CPA, 2015

Co-Organizer, Junior Metaphysics Workshop, Grand Valley State 2015

Co-Organizer, Junior Metaphysics Workshop, Western Michigan, 2013

Organizer, *Metaphysical Virtues* Conference, Western Michigan, 2013

Symposium Organizer: "Possibilities and Propositions" CPA, 2013

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Philosophy, Western Michigan, 2012-2013

Speaker Series Coordinator, Department of Philosophy, Western Michigan, 2011- 2013

Co-Organizer, *On the Plurality of Worlds* Conference, University of Massachusetts, 2011

External Examinations

Joshua Kelleher, *The Limits of Classical Mereology: Mixed Fusions and the Failures of Mereological Hybridism*, PhD, Queensland, 2020

Refereeing (** indicates multiple assignments)

Acta Analytica, *American Philosophical Quarterly**, *Analysis**, *Analytic Philosophy**, *Asian Journal of Philosophy*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy**, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy**, *Dialectica**, *Dialogue*, *Ergo*, *Erkenntnis**, *Estetika*, *European Journal for Philosophy of Science*, *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, *Inks: Journal of the Comics Studies Society*, *Inquiry**, *International Studies in Philosophy of Science*, *Metaphysics*, *Mind**, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association**, *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy*, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, *Journal of Philosophy**, *Nous**, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly**, *Philosophia**, *Philosophy*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Philosophical Review**, *Philosophical Studies**, *Philosophical Quarterly**, *Philosophers' Imprint**, *Ratio*, *Res Philosophica**, *Review of Metaphysics*, *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, *Synthese**, *Theoria*, *Thought*

Book Manuscripts: Bloomsbury, Cambridge University Press*, Oxford University Press*, Routledge

Grant Proposals: Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Swiss National Science Foundation