

Ryan Simonelli

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Philosophy,
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Education:

University of Chicago. 2015-2022.
PhD, Philosophy.

University of Pittsburgh. Fall 2019.
Visiting Scholar, supervised by Robert Brandom.

New College of Florida (The Honors College of Florida). 2010-2014.
BA, Philosophy.

Oxford University. Winter 2013.
Visiting Student.

Employment:

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

Areas of Specialty:

Philosophy of Language, Philosophical Logic, History of Analytic Philosophy

Areas of Competence:

Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology, Philosophy of Religion, Indian Buddhist Philosophy

Publications:

"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.

"Sellars's Ontological Nominalism." *European Journal of Philosophy*. 2021. Early access: <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.

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

Papers in Progress:

“Semantics without Contents” (under review)

“Why Must Incompatibility Be Symmetric?” (under review)

“Bringing Bilateralisms Together (and Pulling Them Apart Again)”

“On the Self-Undoing of Madhyamaka Philosophy”

Interview:

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

Refereed Presentations:

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

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

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

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

“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.

University of Chicago Workshop Presentations:

“Sellars’s Two Worlds.” February 2022. The German Philosophy Workshop.

“Simply Substructural Semantics.” November 2021. Graduate Student Research Symposium.

“Sellars’s Ontological Nominalism.” November 2020. The Theoretical Philosophy Workshop.

“Frege and the Logical Notion of Judgment.” April 2019. The German Philosophy Workshop.

“Discursive Role Semantics.” February 2019. The Theoretical Philosophy Workshop.

“Propositions and the Power to Represent.” December 2017. The Linguistics and Philosophy Workshop.

“The Skeptical Thought and Its Dissolution.” October 2017. The Wittgenstein Workshop.

“Indexicality, Opacity, and Perspectivalty.” March 2017. The Linguistics and Philosophy Workshop.

“Comments on Markus Gabriel’s ‘The Meaning of “Existence” and the Contingency of Sense’.” April 2016. Contemporary European Philosophy Workshop.

“Having Knowledge in Experience.” April 2016. German Philosophy Workshop.

Honors and Awards:

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:

Doing Things with Words: A Venture into Speech Act Theory. University of Chicago. Winter 2022 (prosecutive).

Philosophical Perspectives II. University of Chicago (Core curriculum). Winter 2022 (prosecutive).

Science Fiction and Philosophy. University of Chicago. Fall 2022 (prosecutive).

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

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.

Professional Service:

Referee:

The Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy (× 2), *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 (Irada 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”* (Irada Kimhi)

Constitutivism (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)

Research Groups, Reading Groups, and Special Seminars:

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). (logicaexpressivism.wixsite.com/role)

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

Reading Groups:

James Shaw's *Wittgenstein on Rules*, led by James Shaw (2021).

Wilfrid Sellars's *Science and Metaphysics*, with Lawrence Dallman, Till Hoepfner, and Joe Brewer, (2018-2019).

James Conant's *The Logical Alien*, with Till Hoepfner, Andrew Pitel, Amy Levine, and (occasionally) James Conant, (2018).

Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, led by Brian Leiter (2015).

Speical 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.

Non-academic Philosophical Writing:

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
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James Conant
University of Chicago
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Michael Kremer
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Malte Willer
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Benjamin Callard (teaching)
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