

Alison Peterman

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EMPLOYMENT

Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Rochester, 2019 to present.

Associate Professor of Brain and Cognitive Sciences (Secondary appointment), University of Rochester, July 2021 to present.

Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Rochester, July 2023 to July 2024.

Co-chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Rochester, July 2021 to June 2023.

BA Program Director, Rochester Education Justice Initiative, 2018 to present.

James P. Wilmot Distinguished Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of Rochester, 2015 to 2017.

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of Rochester, 2012 to 2015, 2018.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophy, Northwestern University, 2012.

M.S. Physics, University of Maryland, 2012.

B.S. Philosophy, University of Richmond, 2004.

RESEARCH AREAS

Areas of Specialization: Early Modern Philosophy, History of Philosophy of Science, Metaphysics

Areas of Concentration: Philosophy of Perception, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology

RESEARCH

Books

My book about Margaret Cavendish will be published in the Routledge Philosophers Series in March 2025. I am starting on a manuscript on parts and wholes in early modern natural philosophy.

Articles

“‘Actions of a body sentient’: Cavendish on the mind (and against panpsychism),” forthcoming in *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Mind*.

“Cavendish on matter and materialism,” R&R at *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*.

“The world soul in 17th century natural philosophy,” *Oxford Philosophical Concepts: World Soul*, edited by James Wilberding (Oxford University Press), 2021.

“Spinoza’s Physics,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Spinoza*, edited by Yitzhak Melamed (Blackwell), 2021.

“Cavendish on motion and mereology,” *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*, July 2019.

“Spinoza and the mind-body relation,” *Spinoza in 21st-Century American and French Philosophy*, ed. Charles Ramond and Jack Stetter, Bloomsbury, 2019. In French translation in *Spinoza transatlantique, Les interprétations américains de Spinoza aujourd’hui*.

“Canonizing Cavendish” (Essay review of David Cunning’s *Cavendish*), *Journal of the History of Philosophy of Science*, preprint: <https://doi.org/10.1086/696383>.

“Newton and Spinoza,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Newton*, ed. Eric Schliesser and Chris Smeenk (Oxford University Press), 2018.

“Empress vs. Spider-Man: Cavendish on pure and applied mathematics,” *Synthese*, preprint: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1504-y>.

“The ‘physical’ interlude,” in *Cambridge Critical Guide to Spinoza’s Ethics*, ed. Yitzhak Melamed (Cambridge University Press), 2017.

“Spinoza on Skepticism,” in *Skepticism: From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Diego Machuca and Baron Reed (Bloomsbury), 2018.

“Two Kinds of Embodiment,” in *Embodiment: A History*, ed. Justin E. H. Smith (Oxford University Press), 2016.

“Spinoza on Extension and Space,” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 15(14), April 2015, 1-23.

“Spinoza on Physical Science,” *Philosophy Compass* 9(3), March 2014.

“Spinoza on the ‘principles of natural things,’” *Leibniz Review* 22, December 2012.

Reviews, Interviews, Encyclopedia Articles, Miscellany

Review of Tad Schmaltz, *The Metaphysics of Suarez, Descartes, and Spinoza*, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2022.

“Spinoza and the sciences,” for *Encyclopedia of Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences* (Springer), 2020.

“Margaret Cavendish,” for *Encyclopedia of Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences* (Springer), 2020.

Interview with the APA about diversifying the canon, 2018 (<https://blog.apaonline.org/2018/09/10/diversifying-the-canon-interview-with-alison-peterman/>)

Featured PhilosopHer, Philosophy of Science Association

Review of Deborah Boyle, *The Well-Ordered Universe*, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2019.

Review of *The Young Spinoza*, ed. Yitzhak Melamed, in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*.

Author Meets Critics: Yitzhak Melamed's *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*, Mod Squad (<https://philosophymodsquad.wordpress.com/2014/04/21/alison-petermans-comments-on-spinozas-metaphysics-substance-and-thought-part-1/>)

Physics (selected)

With the CMS Collaboration, all papers from July 2011 until September 2012, including "Observation of a new boson at a mass of 125 GeV with the CMS experiment at the LHC." *Phys. Lett. B.* 716 (1), 17 September 2012, 30-61 (<http://arxiv.org/abs/1207.7235v2>).

With the MINERvA Collaboration. "Demonstration of Communication Using Neutrinos." *Mod. Phys. Lett. A* 27 (2012) (<http://arxiv.org/abs/1203.2847v2>).

PRESENTATIONS

"Cavendish, panpsychism, and anti-anthropocentrism"

Panpsychism and its history, Cornell University (organized by Karolina Huebner), November 2023

"Cavendish against panpsychism"

University of Notre Dame, December 2022.

Simon Fraser University, February 2023.

"Cavendish on mereology and the mind"

The Johns Hopkins University, February 2022.

University of California, San Diego, February 2022.

"Cavendish and Spinoza on metaphysical structure"

University of Groningen, November 2021.

University of Mississippi, November 2021.

University of Manitoba, January 2021.

University of California at Davis, March 2020.

University of Richmond, March 2020.

Eastern APA, January 2020.

"Levels of Explanation in Spinoza"

NYC Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy / Israel Technion University, July 2021.

"Cavendish on materialism and metaphysical structure"

The International Congress of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Prague, August 2019.

Queens University, Kingston, ON, February 2019.

"The world soul in early modern philosophy"

Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, April 2020 (cancelled).

Workshop on organicism, University of Ghent, June 2019.

Conference on the world soul, Humboldt University, Berlin, November 29, 2018.

Spinoza workshop, University of Toronto, September 2018.

“Mary Shepherd and memory”

Tahoe Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy, May 27, 2018.

University of Rochester Humanities Center, April 19, 2018.

“Margaret Cavendish and the problem of bodies”

Workshop in honor of Katherine Brading, University of Notre Dame, March 23, 2017.

“Spinoza on the world soul”

Spinoza: New Directions in Research, University of Toronto, September 15, 2018.

“Two theories of the mental”

French-American Spinoza conference, Paris, France, June 4, 2016.

London Spinoza Circle, May 19, 2016.

“Cavendish on motion and true predication”

Lehigh University, Women In Early Modern Philosophy, October 19, 2017.

University of Southern California, February 10, 2017.

University of Colorado at Boulder, December 15, 2016.

Cornell University, November 14, 2016.

Society for Analytical Feminism, September 17, 2016.

Chicago Early Modern Roundtable, June 13, 2016.

“The inferior spiderman: Cavendish on pure and applied mathematics”

New Narratives in Philosophy Conference, Duke University, April 14, 2016.

University of Pittsburgh HPS, January 16, 2016.

University of California, Irvine, LPS, January 21, 2016.

“Two kinds of embodiment: Descartes and Spinoza”

University of Pittsburgh, January 15, 2016.

University of Maryland, December 10, 2015.

Georgetown University, December 3, 2015.

“Intelligibility and Theories of Matter”

University of Maryland Physics Seminar, October 13, 2015.

Laboratory for Laser Energetics, Science and Technology Seminar Series, April 10, 2014.

“Weird theories of matter from natural philosophy”

Department of Chemistry Seminar Series, University of Rochester, February 24, 2014.

- Physics and Philosophy Lecture Series, University of Rochester, April 29, 2013.
- “Spinoza on Embodiment”
- Temple University, October 29, 2015.
 Université Paris Diderot, December 18, 2014.
- “Spinoza on Extension and Space”
- Attributes Workshop, Barnard College, August 22, 2014.
 Pacific Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, 2013.
 The 17th Foundations of Physics UK and European Meeting, LMU Munich, 2013.
- “Spinoza on Physical Science.”
- Mid-Atlantic Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, Princeton, NY, 2012.
 University at Buffalo, February 11, 2012.
 University of Rochester, February 18, 2012.
- “The attribute-neutral foundations of Spinoza’s physics”
- Biennial Conference for the Society for the History of Philosophy of Science, Ghent, Belgium, July 3, 2014 (*invited*).
 From Medieval to Modern Philosophy, Boulder, CO, July 20, 2015.
- “The Common Notions”
- Sarton Center for the History of Science, December 10, 2014.
 Princeton-Bucharest Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy, Bran, Romania, July 11, 2014.
 Early Modern Philosophy Workshop, University of Toronto, April 11, 2014.
 Hobbes and Spinoza Workshop, University of Pittsburgh, October 18, 2013.
- “Spinoza’s Physical Interlude.”
- Central Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, 2011.
- “Spinoza, Naturalism, and Explanatory Physicalism.”
- Biennial Conference for the Society for the History of Philosophy of Science, Central European University, Budapest, 2010.
- “On Spinoza’s Explanatory Physicalism.”
- South Central Conference in Early Modern Philosophy, University of Texas, San Antonio, 2009.
- “Contractualism and Constructivism.”
- Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, University of Colorado, 2008.
- “*Conatus* in Spinoza’s Physical Philosophy.”
- Northwestern University Research Seminar, 2007.
- “The Spirit in Plato’s *Republic*”
- Manfred S. Frings Philosophy Colloquium, DePaul University, 2006.

Comments

On Julia Jorati's *Natural Slavery in Early Modern Philosophy*. Workshop at Harvard University, April 2022.

On Marius Stan's "Newtonianism and the physics of Emilie du Chatelet's *Institutions de Physique*". Workshop on the Philosophy of Emilie du Chatelet, Harvard University, February 22, 2020.

On David Cunnings's *Cavendish*; Author Meets Critics session. Pacific Meeting of the APA, Seattle, WA, April 12, 2017.

On Karen Bennett's *Making Things Up*, Morris Colloquium on Metaphysics and its History, UC Boulder, March 12, 2016.

On Yitzhak Melamed's *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*. AMC event, The Mod Squad blog. April 2014.

On John Gray's "Necessitarianism in Spinoza". Eastern Meeting of the APA, Philadelphia, PA, December 28, 2014.

On Ursula Goldenbaum's "The Necessitarian Threat of the Geometrical Method due to its Mathematizing of Nature." The Language of Nature: Reconsidering the Mathematization of Science, Rotman Institute for Philosophy of Science and Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science, London, Ontario, October 2012.

On Karolina Huebner's "Spinoza on the Power of Thought." Upstate New York Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy, Cornell University, December 2012.

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS AND AWARDS

University of Rochester Humanities Center Fellowship (Spring 2018)

Participant, NEH Summer Seminar: Between Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy (Summer 2015)

Co-coordinator, Upstate New York Workshop in Early Modern Philosophy (Mellon Foundation, 2013-2016)

James P. Wilmot Distinguished Assistant Professorship for the Humanities (2014-2016)

Selected as "Young Researcher" to attend the Lindau Meeting of Nobel Laureates in Physics, 2012.

Paris Program in Critical Theory Fellowship (for one year of study in Paris at École Normale Supérieure and École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2008-2009).

Graduate Fellowship, Northwestern University (2004-2010).

Oldham Scholarship, University of Richmond (Merit scholarship granting full tuition, room, board and stipend, 2000-2004).

RESEARCH EMPLOYMENT (PHYSICS)

Research associate, the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) experiment at the LHC/CERN (2010-2012)

Research associate, the MINERvA neutrino scattering experiment at Fermilab (2009-2010)

Research associate, NA48 charge-parity violation experiment at LEP/CERN (2001-2002)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate seminar in Philosophy of Mind: Panpsychism: Spring 2022

Beyond Dualism: Fall 2021

Graduate seminar in Metaphysics and Its History (Parts and Wholes), co-taught with Paul Audi: Fall 2020

Political Philosophy: Fall 2020 (Groveland Correctional Facility)

Introduction to Philosophy: Spring 2017 (Five Points Correctional Facility), Spring 2019, Fall 2019 (Groveland Correctional Facility), Fall 2022 (Attica Correctional Facility)

Introduction to Logic: Fall 2018

Graduate seminar in Philosophy of Mind and Its History (Abstraction), co-taught with Hayley Clatterbuck: Fall 2017

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (grad/undergrad): Fall 2017

Graduate seminar in Metaphysics and Its History (Properties and Predications), co-taught with Paul Audi: Fall 2016

Theory of Perception (cross-listed with Cognitive Science: Fall 2014 (with Lauren Emberson) and Fall 2018 (with Richard Lange)

Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy: Spring 2013-2018, 2020-21, Fall 2021

Empiricism (grad/undergrad): Spring 2015

Rationalism (grad/undergrad): Spring 2016

Hume and Reid (grad/undergrad): Spring 2017

Freedom (undergraduate seminar for majors): Spring 2014

Graduate seminar on Leibniz's metaphysics: Fall 2013

Reason and Argument: Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2016

Perception (undergraduate seminar for majors): Spring 2013

Early Modern Philosophy of Perception: Fall 2012

RESEARCH LANGUAGES

Latin, French, German, Spanish

SERVICE AND ADVISORY ROLES

Presenter, New Currents in Teaching Philosophy (The Council of Independent Colleges), July 2022

Steering committee member, The Society for the History of Philosophy of Science (HOPOS), 2020-present

At the University of Rochester

Steering Committee Member, HOPOS, 2021-2024.

Faculty advisor, Rochester Education Justice Initiative (2019-present)

Colloquium director (Spring 2018)

Director of graduate admissions (2014, 2016)

Director of job placement (2012-2015, 2020)

Dissertation Committee Chair: Tessa Brunnenmeyer (Rochester Philosophy, in progress), Dorothea Hinman (Rochester Philosophy, in progress)

Dissertation Committee Member: Richard Lange (Brain and Cognitive Science, 2020), Santiago Alonso Diaz (Brain and Cognitive Science, 2017), Tommy Blanchard (Brain and Cognitive Science, 2015), Brooke (Philosophy, Temple University, 2024), Kevin (Villanova university, expected 2025), Stephen Harrop (Philosophy, Yale University, 2022).

Search Committee Member, Dean of Arts and Sciences (2024)

Search Committee Member: Philosophy of Science (2013-14, 2024), Philosophy of Language (2017-18), Epistemology (2024)

Member, Workshop in Philosophy and Physics

University Fulbright committee (2014, 2016)

Organizer: Workshop on Spinoza's Metaphysics (with Yitzhak Melamed, Anat Schechtman, Michael LeBuffe, Fall 2013)