

Dean McHugh

Email: d.m.mchugh@uva.nl

Website: sites.google.com/site/deanmchugh1

CV last updated January 9, 2024.

Department of Philosophy
University of Amsterdam,
Oude Turfmarkt 143 room 2.11
1012 GC Amsterdam

Institute for Logic, Language,
and Computation,
Science Park 107 room F2.16
1098 XG Amsterdam

Areas of specialisation

BROAD Philosophical logic, philosophy of language, causation.

NARROW Modality, conditionals, causal models, semantics.

Areas of competence

Metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of logic, decision theory.

Employment

2023–present Postdoctoral Researcher.
ILLC & Department of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam.

Education

2018–2023 PhD Logic, ILLC & Department of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam.
2016–2018 MSc Logic, ILLC & Department of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam.
2014–2015 Visiting student, University of Toronto.
2012–2016 BA Philosophy and English Literature, Trinity College Dublin.

Publications

Articles

- 2024 A Problem for Downward Closure in the Semantics of Counterfactuals. *Selected Reflections in Language, Logic, and Information*, edited by Alexandra Pavlova, Mina Young Pedersen and Raffaella Bernardi, pp. 177–186. doi:[10.1007/978-3-031-50628-4_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-50628-4_11).
- 2023 Exhaustification in the semantics of ‘cause’ and ‘because’. *Glossa* 45(1). doi:[10.16995/glossa.7663](https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.7663)

- 2022 Aboutness and Modality. *Proceedings of the 2022 Amsterdam Colloquium*, edited by Marco Degano, Tom Roberts, Giorgio Sbardolini and Marieke Schouwstra, pp. 194–206. [Link](#).
- 2020 Are Causes Ever Too Strong? Downward Monotonicity in the Causal Domain. *Monotonicity in Logic and Language*, edited by Dun Deng, Fenrong Liu, Mingming Liu and Dag Westerståhl, pp. 125–146. doi:[10.1007/978-3-662-62843-0_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-62843-0_7)
- 2019 Negation and Alternatives in Conditional Antecedents. *Proceedings of the 22nd Amsterdam Colloquium*, pp. 289–98. With Alexandre Cremers. [Link](#).
- 2018 A Diagrammatic Definition of Causation. *Diagrams 2018: Diagrammatic Representation and Inference*, edited by P. Chapman, G. Stapleton, A. Moktefi, S. Perez-Kriz and F. Bellucci, pp. 346–354. doi:[10.1007/978-3-319-91376-6_32](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91376-6_32)

Dissertations

- 2023 *Causation and Modality*. University of Amsterdam PhD Thesis. Supervisor: Katrin Schulz, Promotor: Sonja Smets. Examined by:
- Maria Aloni
 - Ivano Ciardelli
 - Huub Dijkstra
 - Thomas Icard
 - Angelika Kratzer
 - Joris Mooij
 - Floris Roelofsen
- 2018 *Counterfactuals and the logic of imaginative content*. MSc Thesis. Supervisor: Katrin Schulz. ILLC, University of Amsterdam.
- 2016 *A typed truthmaker semantics of ground*. BA Thesis. Supervisors: Peter Simons and J.T.M. Miller. Trinity College Dublin.

Presentations

- 2024 Wide Scope Simplification: Free Choice Effects from Disjunctions of Conditionals. [The 4th Tsinghua Interdisciplinary Workshop on Logic, Language, and Meaning \(TLLM IV\)](#), Tsinghua University, Beijing, March 30–31, 2024.
- 2024 TBA. COCOA Seminar, Paris, 9 February 2024.
- 2024 Conditional perfection in the semantics of causal claims. Colloquium on Empirical English Linguistics, Humboldt University, Berlin, 18 January 2024.
- 2023 A new test for discrimination: the existential *but-for* test. [Causality for Ethics and Society](#), Munich Centre for Mathematical Philosophy, 24–25 July 2023. [CEPDISK'23 Conference on Discrimination](#), Aarhus University, 12–13 October 2023.

- 2023 Unraveling Sartorio's Difference-Making Principle. [Fourteenth International Tbilisi Symposium on Logic, Language and Computation](#). 18–22 September 2023.
- 2022 Aboutness and Modality. [23rd Amsterdam Colloquium](#). 19–21 December 2022.
- 2022 Imagining a different world: defining sufficiency using truthmaker semantics [Logic4Peace](#). 22–23 April 2022.
- 2021 Exhaustification in the semantics of *cause* and *because*. [Meaning, Logic and Cognition \(MLC\) Seminar](#), ILLC. 5 November 2021.
- 2021 *Because* lexicalizes a focus-sensitive exhaustification operator that violates Economy. [Generative Linguistics in the Old World \(GLOW\) 44](#). 15 April 2021.
- 2021 Negation and counterfactuals in conditional antecedents. PhD seminar on conditionals, London, with Alexandre Cremers. 26 February 2021.
- 2021 Newcomb's problem: an introduction to decision theory. [Φ-Math Group](#), ILLC, University of Amsterdam. 29 January 2021.
- 2020 Are causes ever too strong? Downward left monotonicity in the causal domain. [Second Tsinghua Interdisciplinary Workshop on Logic, Language, and Meaning \(TLLM 2020\): Monotonicity in Logic and Language](#), Beijing. 17–20 December 2020.
- 2020 The Limits of Causal Graphs: Density. Logic Seminar, Charles University, Prague. 23 November 2020.
- 2020 Causality, magic, and tense-modal interaction. UMass Amherst semantics seminar. 9 October 2020.
- 2020 How to cause the inevitable. [10th European Congress of Analytic Philosophy \(ECAP 10\)](#), University of Utrecht. 24–28 August 2020.
- 2020 Homogeneity and domain restriction in the semantics of causal claims. [Meaning, Logic and Cognition \(MLC\) Seminar](#), ILLC, University of Amsterdam. 8 May 2020.
- 2020 Causality = time + modality + effective difference-making. [Logic and Interactive Rationality \(LIRA\) Seminar](#). 5 March 2020.
- 2019 Negation and alternatives in conditional antecedents. [22nd Amsterdam Colloquium](#). 18–20 December 2019.
- 2019 Actual causality in dynamical systems. Workshop on Statistical Inference, University of Amsterdam. 3 December 2019.
- 2019 How to cause the inevitable. [OSZW 2019](#) (annual conference of the Dutch Research School in Philosophy). 15–16 November 2019.
- 2019 A problem for inquisitive semantics of conditionals. [ESSLLI 2019 Student Session](#). 5–16 August 2019.
- 2019 Exclusification in conditional antecedents. Crete Summer School in Linguistics (CreteLing) Poster Session.
- 2019 Negation and alternatives in conditional semantics. [Inquisitive Semantics Seminar](#), ILLC, University of Amsterdam.

- 2019 The foundations of mechanistic reasoning. University of Amsterdam philosophy symposium. 28 February 2019.
- 2017 Winning Questions: Inquisitive semantics and the lottery paradox. [Fifth LSE Graduate Conference in Philosophy of Probability](#), London School of Economics. 2–3 June 2017. Joint work with Grzegorz Lisowski and Max Rapp.
- 2016 Paradoxical predicates. [Cool Logic](#), ILLC, University of Amsterdam. 2 December 2016.
- 2016 Imagining things otherwise. PLM Masterclass on Timothy Williamson, Institute of Advanced Study, University of London. 18–19 November 2016.
- 2015 What does it mean to call something fundamental? Carlow College Philosophy Colloquium.
- 2015 Identical Effects: Retrodeterminism and the Principles of Physics. Trinity College Dublin Metaphysical Society.
- 2015 Believing for the better. Colloquium on the Uses of Philosophy, University of Limerick.

Teaching

Lecturer

- 2023 [Logical Analysis](#). BA Philosophy, University of Amsterdam.
The goal of this course is to teach skills and knowledge that are useful for an analytical approach to philosophy. Essentially this course is about extending one's philosophical toolbox, adding tools that are regularly used in analytical approaches to philosophy of language, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, but also, for instance, analytical ethics.
- 2023 [Philosophy of Language](#). MA Philosophy & MSc Logic, University of Amsterdam. Co-taught with Elsbeth Brouwer.
This course provides an introduction to the contemporary analytical philosophy of language. We will discuss cognitivist, platonist and realist conceptions of meaning, and study a variety of topics, such as semantic externalism, translatability of language, communicative action and language acquisition. These subjects will be studied through primary texts of authors such as Frege, Wittgenstein, Putnam, Grice, Butler, Davidson and Quine.
- 2022 [Causal Inference: philosophical theory and modern practice](#). MSc Logic & MA Philosophy, University of Amsterdam.
In the first part of the course we study analyses of causation, both historical and contemporary. We will learn about the substantial progress researchers have recently made analysing causality. Among the questions we will consider are:
 - How do we build a causal model of a scenario?

- What does the word “cause” mean?
- How do we imagine hypothetical alternatives to reality?

2020 [Hypothetical Reasoning: its development and impact](#). MSc Logic, University of Amsterdam.

This course investigates the development and moral implications of hypothetical reasoning. The course will consist of lectures on moral responsibility, causation, and applications in the law, as well as individual supervision for students to develop their own projects.

Supervision

Supervisor of Frank Goossens, MSc Logic student, with weekly meetings, for a project on the analysis of modality and explanations, with a focus on case studies from the law, resulting in a paper.

Supervisor of ten MSc Logic students as part of the project *Hypothetical Reasoning*, with each student giving a presentation and writing a final paper.

Sample of student feedback from course evaluations

“Dean is just an amazing lecturer. He explains complicated things in a very accessible way, provides illustrative examples, makes sure that people are following him through the class, his slides are perfectly structured. I might go on all day with the qualities.”

“I loved his accessibility, availability, clarity, passion for what he teaches.”

“The lecturers were amazingly structured, and Dean explained complex topics in a really clear manner. I appreciated how the lecturers went beyond the readings we had done for the session, helping us both to take review the concepts we had read and take a critical stance on the arguments.”

“Dean was very patient and friendly and could explain everything very clearly. He showed great empathy towards students, which was very welcome during this course.”

“He does a phenomenal job ... Give that man a raise.”

“He did a great job of explaining the relevance of the theoretical perspectives. He was also encouraged interactive participation with the lectures, and was very helpful during open office hours.”

Complete course evaluations available on request.

Outreach

2022 Interview with [Lab42 magazine](#) about applications of my PhD research.

- 2021 Interview for the podcast *Talk That Science* on applications of semantics and causal inference to law, with Nicolien Janssens, Thijmen Nuninga, and Nikki Weststeijn.
- 2019 Talk at the ILLC Open Day, an event to showcase ILLC research to the public. 4 October 2019.
- 2017 Interview for the podcast *Logically Speaking*, on paradoxes and decision theory, with Max van den Broek.
- 2016 Philosophical Logic Explained for a Teenager. A non-technical introduction to philosophical logic. *The Junior Philosopher*. Project for HubSpot.
- 2015 Interview in *University of Toronto News* for research on metaphysics.

Employment

- 2018 PhD Candidate, Institute of Logic, Language and Computation, Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam. Supervisor: Katrin Schulz.
- 2014 Researcher, Language and Pedagogy. University of Innsbruck, Austria. Supervisor: Dr Silvia Prock. Summer employment. Funded by the EU FP7 project, Science in Society Catalyst.
- 2013 Teaching Intern, University of Innsbruck, Austria. Supervisor: Dr Silvia Prock. Summer internship.

Grants, awards and scholarships

- 2019 Award for best presentation. ESSLLI 2019 Student Session.
- 2018 PhDs in the Humanities grant (€225,000), project [PGW.18.028](#). Project title: *Foundations of Mechanistic Reasoning: the structure of asking 'how'*. Promoter: Sonja Smets; supervisor: Katrin Schulz. Dutch Research Council (NWO)
- 2016 [Gold Medal](#). Trinity College Dublin.
- 2016 [Wray Travelling Scholarship](#). Trinity College Dublin.
- 2016 [Arthur Aston Luce Memorial Prize](#). Trinity College Dublin.
- 2015 [Undergraduate Awards](#), Highly Commended.
- 2014 [Lilian Mary Luce Memorial Prize](#). Trinity College Dublin.
- 2014 [Henry Stewart Macran Prize](#). Trinity College Dublin.
- 2014 [Cotter Prize in Modern Languages](#) (€75). Trinity College Dublin.
- 2014 Dean of Students' Roll of Honour. Trinity College Dublin.
- 2013 [John Issac Beare Prize in Philosophy](#). Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.
- 2012 [Trinity College Dublin Entrance Scholar](#).

Professional service

Organising

- 2022 [ESSLI Student Session co-chair](#), with Alexandra Mayn.
- 2021–2022 [ILLC Diversity Committee](#) member.
- 2020 & 2021 Logic & Language co-chair, with Jonathan Pesetsky.
[ESSLI Student Session](#).
- 2019–present Co-organiser, with Milica Denić and Giorgio Sbardolini.
[Meaning, Logic and Cognition Seminar](#) and [DIP Colloquium](#), ILLC.
- 2018–present Organiser, [Causal Inference Lab](#), University of Amsterdam.
- 2016–present Co-organiser, [Cool Logic](#), University of Amsterdam.
A bi-weekly seminar by and for students of the ILLC.
- 2019 Co-organiser, with Floris Roelofsen, Patty den Enting,
Peter van Ormondt, Julian Schlöder and Katrin Schulz.
[22nd Amsterdam Colloquium](#), 18–20 December 2019.
- 2013–2014 Student mentor. [Student2Student Programme](#), Trinity College Dublin.

Peer review

I have reviewed for

Linguistics and Philosophy

Journal of Semantics

Synthese

Semantics and Pragmatics

Erkenntnis (multiple times)

Philosophical Studies

The ESSLI Student Session

Languages

English: native • Dutch: intermediate • Irish: good • French: good • German: good