

ALAN NELSON

May 2024

Employment

- 2024 - Emeritus Professor of Philosophy; UNC at Chapel Hill
- 2006 – 2024 Professor of Philosophy; UNC at Chapel Hill
- 2014-2017 Harold J. Glass Distinguished Term Professor of Philosophy; UNC at Chapel Hill
- 1988-2006 Assistant, Associate, Full Professor of Philosophy; UC, Irvine
Department Chair, 1998-2002
- 1984-1988 Assistant Professor of Philosophy, UCLA
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- Fall 2004 Visiting Professor of Philosophy, UNC at Chapel Hill
- Winter 1994 Visiting Associate Professor of Philosophy, Stanford University
- Fall 1992 Visiting Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh
- Fall 1987 Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of Southern California

Education

- Ph.D. 1984 University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
- M.S. 1982 University of Wisconsin—Madison (Economics)
- M.A. 1980 University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
- S.B. 1978 MIT

Area of Specialization

History of Modern Philosophy

Publications

a) Articles and Edited Book

Articles entitled, “Descartes,” “Causal Axiom,” “Confusion,” “Necessity (Contingency and Possibility),” “Thought,” and “*Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*,” forthcoming in *The Cambridge Spinoza Lexicon*, K. Hübner, and J. Steinberg, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (9500 words total).

“The Epistemology of Early Modern Science,” forthcoming in *The History and Philosophy of the Scientific Revolution*, M. Stan, et al., eds., London: Bloomsbury.

“The Rationalist Reception of Descartes” forthcoming in *The Cartesian Mind*, J. Secada and C. Wee, eds. New York: Routledge. (With Noa Shein)

“Port-Royal Logic” (2022), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (with Jill Buroker).
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/port-royal-logic/>

“Berkeley and Descartes” (2022) in *The Oxford Handbook of Berkeley*, S. Rickless, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

“Descartes on Modality,” (2021) in *The Routledge Handbook of Modality*, O. Bueno and S. Shalkowski, eds. Oxford: Routledge.

“Anti-Mathematicism,” (2020) in *Encyclopedia of Early Modern Philosophy and the Sciences*, D. Jalobeanu and C. Wolfe, eds. Springer Publishing: 447-51.

“Descartes on the Limited Usefulness of Mathematics,” *Synthese*, 2019: 3483-3504.

“Early Modern Theories of Truth,” (2018) in *The Oxford Handbook of Truth*, edited by M. Glanzberg. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

“Logic and Knowledge,” (2017) in *A Companion to Seventeenth Century Philosophy*, edited D. Kaufman, 224-49. New York: Routledge.

“The Cartesian Circle,” (2016a) in *The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon*, edited by L. Nolan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 109-18.

“Idea,” (2016b) *The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 387-95.

“Primitive Notions,” (2016c) in *The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press: 607-13.

“Descartes’ Logic and the Paradox of Deduction,” (2015a) in *The Battle of the Gods and Giants Redux*, edited by P. Easton and K. Smith. Leiden/Boston: Brill: 106-36. (with Brian Rogers).

“The Problem of True Ideas in Spinoza’s *Treatise*,” (2015b) in *The Young Spinoza*, edited by Y. Melamed. New York: Oxford University Press.

“Descartes’s Dualism and its Relation to Spinoza’s Metaphysics,” (2014) in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes’ Meditations*, edited by D. Cunniff. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

“Conceptual Distinction and the Concept of Substance in Descartes,” *Protosociology*. 2013a: 194-207.

“Cowboy Rules: Mulholland Drive, Kafka, and Illusory Freedom,” (2013b) in *Mulholland Drive*, edited by Z. Giannopoulou. New York: Routledge.

“Philosophical Systems and Their History,” (2013c) in *Methodology in the History of Philosophy*, edited by M. Laerke, et al. New York: Oxford University Press.

“The Structure of Cartesian Sensations,” *Analytic Philosophy*. 2013d:107-16.

“How Many Worlds?” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*. 2011a:1201-1212.

“Qualities and Simple Ideas: Hume and his Debt to Berkeley,” (2011b) in *Primary and Secondary Qualities*. Lawrence Nolan, ed. Oxford University Press. (with David Landy)

“Divisibility and Cartesian Extension,” *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*. Vol 5, 2010: 1-24. (with Kurt Smith)

“Cartesian Innateness,” (2008) in *A Companion to Descartes*, edited by J. Broughton and J. Carriero. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

“Proofs for the Existence of God,” (2006) in *Descartes’ Meditations*, edited by S. Gaukroger. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. (with Lawrence Nolan).

A Companion to Rationalism. (edited volume). Blackwell: 2005. Including:

- a) “Proust and the Rationalist Conception of the Self,” pp. 399- 407.
- b) “The Rationalist Impulse,” pp. 3-11.
- c) “Leibniz on Modality, Cognition, and Expression,” pp. 282-301.

"Two Concepts of Idealisation in Economics", in *The Economic World View*, edited by U. Maki. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2001: 359-368.

"Cognition and Modality in Descartes," *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, 1999: 137-153. (with David Cunning).

"Circumventing Cartesian Circles," *Noûs*, 1999: 370-404. (with Lex Newman)

"Descartes' Ontology of Thought," *Topoi*, 1997: 163-178.

"Introduction: Descartes' Ontology," *Topoi*, 1997: 103-109.

"The Falsity in Sensory Ideas: Descartes and Arnauld," in *Interpreting Arnauld*, Kremer, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1996: 13-32.

[preprinted as Report Nr. 21/96, Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung der Universität Bielefeld]

"Micro-chaos and Idealization in Cartesian Physics," *Philosophical Studies*, 1995: 377-391.

Critical Study of *Cognitive Economy*, by Nicholas Rescher, *Philosophia*, 1994: 323-31.

"How *Could* Scientific Facts be Socially Constructed?," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, 1994: 535-547.

"Cartesian Actualism in the Leibniz-Arnauld Correspondence," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 1993: 673-692.

"Human Molecules", in *Post-Popperian Methodology of Economics*, de Marchi, N. (ed.). 1992: 113-133. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

"Reply to Caldwell", in *Post-Popperian Methodology of Economics*, de Marchi, N. (ed.). 1992: 151-154. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

"Social Science and the Mental," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. XV, 1990: 194-209.

[REPRINTED in *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*, Martin, M. and Lee McIntyre, eds. 1994: 515-528. Cambridge: MIT Press.]

"Are Economic Kinds Natural?" *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. XIV, 1990: 102-135.

"Average Explanations," *Erkenntnis*, 1989: 23-42.

[REPRINTED in *Philosophy of Economics* 1989, Balzer and Hamminga eds., Hingham, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.]

"Economic Rationality and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1988: 149-166.

Critical Study of *Equilibrium and Macroeconomics*, by Frank Hahn, in *Economics and Philosophy*, 1986: 148-155.

"New Individualistic Foundations for Economics," *Noûs*, 1986: 469-490.

[REPRINTED in *The Philosophers' Annual*, Volume IX, 1986, Athay, P. et al. eds., Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing Co.]

"Explanation and Justification in Political Philosophy," *Ethics*, 1986: 154-176.

"Physical Properties," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 1985: 268-282.

"Some Issues Surrounding the Reduction of Macroeconomics to Microeconomics," *Philosophy of Science*, 1984: 573-594.

b) Book Reviews

Spinoza's Metaphysics by Yitzhak Melamed. (In two parts with a reply)

<https://philosophymodsquad.wordpress.com/2014/04/28/alan-nelsons-comments-on-spinozas-metaphysics-substance-and-thought-part-1/> 2014

Argument and Persuasion in Descartes' Meditations, by David Cunning. *Mind*. 2012

Made with Words... by Philip Pettit. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*. 2008 (with Matthew Priselac)

The Correspondence between Descartes and Elisabeth, ed. and trans. by Lisa Shapiro. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*. 2008: 642-3. (with Seth Bordner).

Descartes Reinvented, by Tom Sorrell. *International Philosophical Quarterly*. 2006. (with Cathay Liu)

Leibniz: Nature and Freedom, D. Rutherford and J. Cover (eds.). *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*. 2006: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=5442> (with John Whipple; 2,700 words)

Meaning in Spinoza's Method, by Aaron Garrett. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*. 2005: 138-9 (with Noa Shein)

What am I? by Joseph Almog. *Philosophical Books*. 2005: 261-2.

Substance and Individuation in Leibniz by Cover and Hawthorne, *The Philosophical Review*. 2004: 136-139.

"Methodology, Reality and Economic Orthodoxy." *The Journal of Economic Methodology* 2003: 420-424.

Locke on Human Understanding, by E.J. Lowe, *Philosophia*, 1999: 665-668. (with Lawrence Nolan)

The Construction of Social Reality, by John Searle, *Ethics*, 1997: 208-210.

The Great Arnould, Elmar Kremer, ed., *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 1996.

Economics...., by Alexander Rosenberg. *Ethics*, 1994: 637-639.

Varieties of Social Explanation, by Daniel Little, *Ethics*, 1993: 404-406.

Marx's Theory of Scientific Knowledge, by Patrick Murray, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 1992: 347-349.

Meaning and Method in the Social Sciences, by Paul Roth, *The Philosophical Review*, 1992: 679-681.

Philosophy of Economics, by Subroto Roy, *Ethics*, 1991: 883-885.

Economics and the Philosophy of Science, by Deborah Redman, *Methodus*, 1991: 128-130.

Rene Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy, John Cottingham (trans.), in *Teaching Philosophy*, 1987: 353-355.

Descartes by Marjorie Grene, in *Ethics*, 1987: 489-491.

c) Miscellaneous Publications

[1] "Booknotes" for *Ethics*:

The Rules of the Game, by Klant, J.

The Boundaries of Economics, ed. by G. Winston, et al.

Essays on Descartes' Meditations, ed. by A. Rorty.

Value, Exploitation and Class, by J. Roemer.

[2] Articles in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (3rd ed.) entitled:

"J.M. Keynes"

"Social Choice Theory"

"Perfect Competition"

"Ideal Market"

"Production Theory"

"James Mill"

"Arrow's Theorem"

[3] Articles in *The Handbook of Economic Methodology* entitled:

"Natural Kinds"

"Experimental Economics"